DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 463 219 SO 033 655

TITLE	Reviews of National Policies for Education: Lithuania. Education and Skills.
INSTITUTION	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Paris (France).
ISBN	ISBN-92-64-18717-0
PUB DATE	2002-00-00
NOTE	274p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2, rue Andre-Pascal, 75775 Paris, Cedex 16, France. Web site: http://www.SourceOECD.org.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC11 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; *Educational Change; *Educational History; *Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Preschool Education; Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS	*Educational Issues; *Lithuania; Social Needs

ABSTRACT

Reform of education, training, and human resource development is an integral part of the transition to a democratic society and market economy. The talents, skills, and knowledge base of the Lithuanian population are crucial in this process, motivating the ambitious scale and urgency of the reforms being advanced for education. Lithuania has made progress in all of these areas since reform began in 1990. The challenge for the Ministry of Education and Science has been to promote and support changes that meet the needs of the new economy and society as well as the interests of all young people and adults, in the face of a shortage of financial and human resources. This book gives a brief overview of regional issues and a history of education in Lithuania and describes the development of education in the country since the political changes. The volume presents an analysis of the entire education system and identifies key directions for the reinforcement of the reforms in light of the challenges encountered by officials, communities, enterprises, educators, parents, and students under very dynamic conditions. It concludes with a set of key recommendations of goals of education, learning effectiveness, outcomes and the curriculum, management and governance for flexibility, responsiveness and change and, resources and financing. (BT)

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Reviews of National Policies for Education

LITHUANIA

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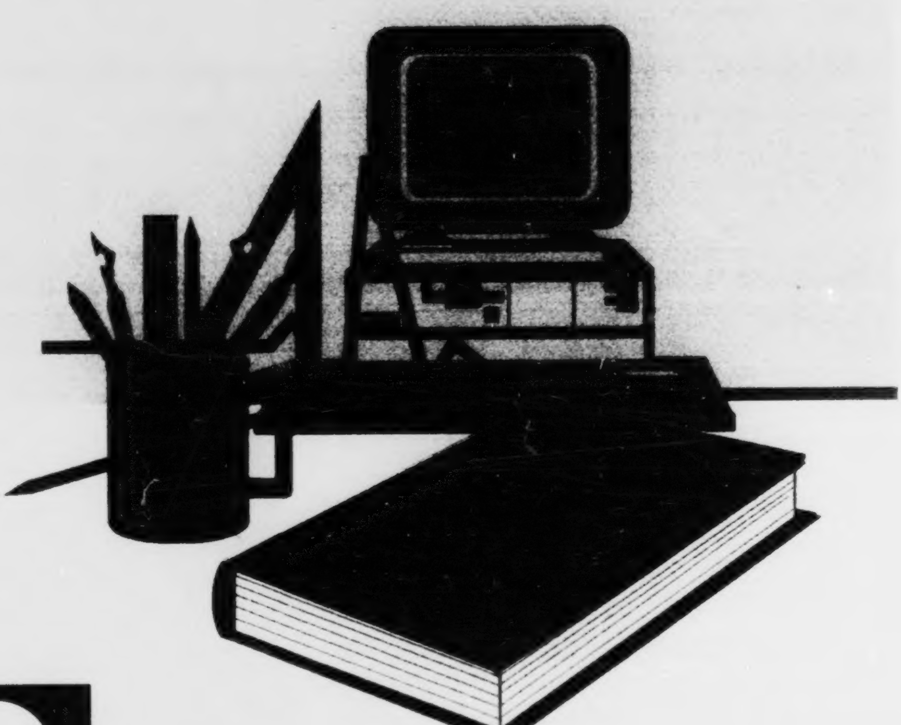

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Reviews of National Policies for Education

Lithuania

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Publié en français sous le titre
Examens des politiques nationales d'éducation
Lituanie

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Foreword

The transition of Lithuania towards a pluralistic democracy and a market economy has been marked by economic, social and political changes of extraordinary breadth and depth. The talents, skills and knowledge base of the Lithuanian population are crucial in this process; hence the ambitious scale and urgency of the reforms being advanced for education. Education has been a central priority of the Baltic Republics since regaining independence. As a small country with limited natural resources, Lithuania sees its human capital as an important asset for entry into the European Union and to compete in the global economy.

This report offers a comprehensive picture of the significant progress in education reform since Lithuania re-established independence. Changes have occurred in the contents of instruction (a new structure and content of curricula), the system of education, institutions (new types of education institutions, a redesigned schooling network) and education provision including new principles of the management and financing of the education system. In 1992, Lithuania produced a General Concept of Education, which set out a programme for the reform of education. Although the principal lines of this Concept have been followed, nevertheless, the OECD examiners concurred with the conclusions of the Lithuanian Government that, despite the progress, the reforms have not always resulted from a comprehensive and publicly supported view on the architecture of the Lithuanian education system and its functioning. Problems have been addressed separately without the necessary co-ordination from the perspective of the whole education system. A renewed emphasis on the updated General Concept supported by the President of Lithuania provides an overall framework for reform and set forth concrete steps for addressing remaining policy issues at every level of the education system. The OECD report provides an overview of the impressive forward thinking leading to these policy statements. and supports these national strategies and offers advice on issues of access, equity, quality, the introduction of new technologies and decentralisation of management and financing responsibilities.

Against the background of material prepared by the Lithuanian authorities and information supplied in meetings in the course of site visits, the examiners' report provides an overview education in the Baltic region and covers the entire system of Lithuanian education from pre-school through tertiary education and

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lifelong learning for all. The report gives an analysis of these sectors in light of the economic, social and political context of Lithuania. The final chapter on strategic development brings together in the form of a synthesis those specific recommendations and sets out how policies can and should be addressed system-wide, linked to priority issues of access and equity, quality, efficiency and governance.

This review of education policy was undertaken within the framework of the Baltic Regional Programme of the OECD Centre for Co-operation with Non-Members (CCNM). The conclusions and recommendations were discussed at a special session of the Education Committee, hosted by Finland on 26 and 27 June 2000 in Helsinki and attended by all three Baltic Ministers of Education. This report incorporates key points raised in the course of that discussion.

Members of the review team were: Aims McGuinness (United States), General Rapporteur, Johanna Crighton (The Netherlands), Boris Galabov (Bulgaria), Constantine Tsolakidis (Greece), Maree Bentley (Australia), Jerzy Wisniewski (Poland), Peter Darvas (The World Bank), Henrik Faudel (European Training Foundation) and Ian Whitman (OECD Secretariat).

This volume is published on the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD.

Eric Burgeat
Director of the OECD
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Overview of Education Policy Reviews of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

Background of the reviews

This review is one of three on education policy in the Baltic States since they regained independence in 1991.

Methodology

The reviews were undertaken by three separate international teams composed of experts and high ranking officials drawn from OECD Member countries and Central and Eastern European States. The same rapporteur, however, participated in each review. Each country provided extensive background data and information. To complement the information gathered for these reports and to avoid duplication, the OECD reviews drew upon reports of the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the European Training Foundation (ETF) and other European Union (EU) agencies and the Soros Foundation as well as other non-governmental organisations. A 1999 OECD review of economic policy in the Baltic States also provided important background information for the education policy reviews.[1]

Importance of the reviews

Education has been a central priority of each of the Baltic States since they regained independence. It is critical to each country's transition from a half-century of Soviet occupation and pervasive impact of Soviet policy, ideology and command economy. As small countries with limited natural resources, the Baltic States recognise that human capital is among their most important assets to compete in the global economy. All three Baltic States understand that progressive education and training policies are essential prerequisites to accession to the European Union.

The OECD reviews are in-depth analyses of policy affecting all education levels and sectors – from early childhood and pre-school education through the doctoral level. While not a specific subject for review, the teams examined science

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policy as it interacts with higher education policy. Since education underpins the economic and social well being of all countries, the reviews addressed the links between education and other issues such as the status of women and children, regional economic development and public administration reform.

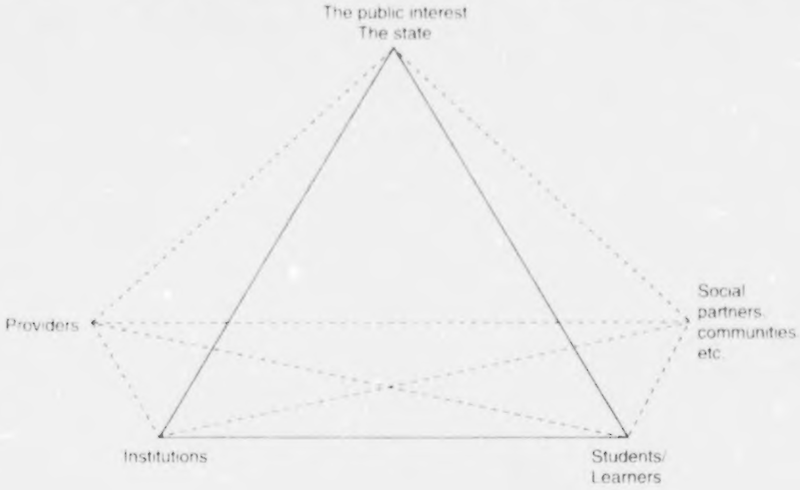
The reviews were carried out at the specific request of national authorities. Each government recognised the value of the reviews to contribute to the national debate about the future of education policy and to raise important issues that it would be difficult for authorities within the country to raise.

The intent of an OECD review is not to evaluate a country's education policy but to place those policies in a comparative perspective. The Baltic States reviews emphasised both themes that cut across all three countries as well as issues that were unique to each country. Particular attention was given to:

- Identifying and respecting the unique geography, demography and economy of each state.
- Identifying good practice in policy and process that could be shared among the three countries and with other OECD Member and Non-Member states.
- Avoiding the uniform application of inappropriate policies to diverse problems.

The reviews focused in particular on the perspective of the state and the public interest and the interaction between state policy and institutions (providers), students/learners and other clients of the education system (social partners, for example). These relationships are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. **Relationship between the state, institutions, students and other clients**



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As in countries throughout the world, governments in the Baltic States have been shifting their focus from a primary concern for maintaining and supporting public institutions toward a greater emphasis on encouraging a wider range of providers (*e.g.* private institutions) to serve student demand and public priorities. The governments are using public policy to ensure responsiveness of the education system to the needs of students/learners and social partners. The OECD teams, therefore, sought to understand how these changes are taking place – and the developing policy issues related to the changes – in each of the Baltic States.

Similarities and differences among Baltic States

While Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have a number of points in common, it is important to recognise points of difference that have a direct bearing on education policy.

Similarities

The following is a summary of important similarities:

- Through their early histories, all three countries experienced extended periods of conflict and domination by foreign powers, most notably the Order of Teutonic Knights, Tsarist Russia, German states and Sweden and in the case of Lithuania, Poland.
- In the aftermath of World War I, all three countries emerged from more than a century within the Russian Empire to gain independence and membership in the League of Nations. All three countries suffered severely in struggles among German, Russian and other forces in the course of World War I.
- In the initial period of independence, all three countries experienced a period of economic growth, improvement in the standard of living and development of democratic institutions, although each experienced periods of political instability and threats to democratic institutions.
- All three countries were subjected to the secret conditions of the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union that led to the stationing of Soviet troops and Soviet control in 1940, followed in June 1940 by Nazi invasion and German occupation until the closing months of World War II, when the Soviet Union regained control. During the alternative periods of Soviet and German occupation, hundreds of thousands of Latvians, Lithuanians and Estonians were either killed or deported to Siberia and hundreds of thousands of others escaped to other countries.
- All three countries experienced Stalin's brutality as the Soviet Union established control after World War II, including imprisonment and deportation of thousands to Siberia, forced immigration of Russian-speaking populations

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from the Soviet Union to work on collectivised farms and in large industries, suppression of religion and imposition of Soviet ideological, military and economic controls.

- In almost 50 years of Soviet occupation, all three countries were subjected to the full force of Soviet ideological, political and economic policies as republics within the Soviet Union. To varying degrees, the Baltic States were afforded limited flexibility to adopt unique education policies reflecting language and culture, but in all other respects the countries were fully integrated into the Soviet Union.
- All three countries experienced a new awakening and drive for independence in the late 1980s in the climate of *glasnost* and *perestroika* and the deterioration of Soviet institutions, culminating in the "Singing Revolution" and the re-establishment of independence in 1990 and 1991. (Lithuania re-established independence on 11 March 1990, Estonia on 20 August 1991 and Latvia on 21 August 1991.
- Upon re-establishing independence, all three countries reverted to Constitutions based largely upon those established in the initial period of independence after World War I.
- All three countries have moved aggressively to adopt progressive governmental, economic, social and education reforms. All three countries have been accepted as candidates for accession to the European Union.

Differences

Several significant differences among the Baltic States, however, are especially important to an understanding of differences in education policy:

- All three countries had unique early histories and relations with other nations and cultures that have had lasting effects on culture and language and continue to influence national perspectives and policy. Lithuania has at times been linked to – and often has had contentious relations with – Poland over its history (Vilnius was part of Poland until World War II). Large parts of Estonia and Latvia were the country of Livonia until the mid-XVIth century. Latvia and Estonia have historically had closer ties with the Nordic countries than Lithuania – Estonia with Finland, Denmark and Sweden and Latvia with Denmark and Sweden.
- Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian are three highly distinct languages. Latvian and Lithuanian belong to the Baltic branch of the Indo-European language family. Estonian belongs to the Finno-Ugric family of languages – along with Finnish, Hungarian, Udmurt, Sami, Komi, Mari, Livonian and Mordvinian.

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- Lithuania is a more ethnically homogeneous country than Estonia and Latvia. In 1999, Lithuanians comprised 81.3% of the populations and Russians (8.4%) and Poles (7%) constituted the largest minority populations. In contrast, 55.7% of Latvia's population was Latvian and 32.2% were ethnic Russians. In Estonia, 65.2% were Estonians and 28.1% were ethnic Russians. The high percentage of ethnic Russians – especially in Estonia and Latvia – reflects the years of forced immigration, especially in the post-World War II period. Since re-establishment of independence, all three countries have experienced an out-migration of Russian populations, although out-migration has slowed considerably in recent years. Within Latvia and Estonia, the concentrations of the ethnic Russian population tend to be in the major urban areas (Riga and Tallinn) and in regions associated with former Soviet industries or large collective farms.
- In Estonia and Latvia the largest religious group is Lutheran but in Lithuania it is Roman Catholic.
- All three countries are parliamentary republics in which the Government is headed by a Prime Minister appointed by the president and a council (Latvia and Estonia) or cabinet (Latvia) of ministers and a president who is head of state. In contrast to Estonia and Latvia where the president is elected by the parliament and plays a largely ceremonial role, the President of Lithuania is elected by popular election to a five-year term and has broader executive powers than the presidents of the other two countries.
- All three countries have pursued economic reforms to move dramatically from the command economy totally controlled by and oriented toward the Soviet Union, to market economies with increasingly strong relationships with Europe and the global economy. Each, however, has pursued independent economic policies with consequent differences in key economic indicators.[2]

Phases of reform

Education reform in the Baltic States is best understood in terms of phases beginning in the late 1980s. Each country's reforms can be traced to initiatives in 1988 (if not earlier) undertaken in the spirit of the new awakening, *perestroika* and the deterioration of Soviet institutions. In this period, each country experienced unprecedented grass roots engagement of educators in the exploration of new possibilities – initially within the Soviet Union and then increasingly with the realisation that full re-establishment of independence was possible.

In the 1990/1992 period all three countries re-established independence and established Constitutions (based largely on earlier Constitutions) and the initial legal framework for education. Each country enacted a basic framework law, a Law on Education, for the education system. While each of these initial education laws

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reflects unique points for each country, the laws include common points regarding democratic principles, freedom from the ideological controls of the past, opportunities for private institutions and significantly increased autonomy for universities. Enacted in the rapidly developing circumstances of 1991, these initial laws would require further refinement in later years.

In the 1992/1994 period, each of the Baltic States faced extraordinary challenges in gaining economic stability and establishing new legal frameworks and institutional structures. The economic dislocation in the collapse of the Soviet-oriented command economy and the slow development of new social and economic policies created severe hardships for each country's education systems. Nevertheless, each country continued to make progress on basic elements of education reform: eliminating ideologically oriented elements within universities, development of new curricula, textbooks and teaching materials and developing new links with Western donors and partners such as the Soros Foundation, the British Council and the European Union Phare programme.

The 1995/1996 period brought a temporary pause in the positive developments since re-establishing independence as banking crises and economic instability drew attention and energy away from education reform. This was also a period in which the governments in each country attempted to shape new state policies to provide a degree of order and direction (*e.g.* through national curricula and standards) to the previously largely decentralised and often fragmented reforms.

In the 1996/1998 period, all three countries experienced their strongest periods of economic revitalisation and growth since 1991. In education reform, each country broadened the conceptual foundation for education reform and developed the second generation of legal frameworks for general education, vocational and professional education and higher education. The Laws on Education first enacted in 1991/1992 were either replaced or amended significantly to reflect an increased maturity in each country's education reforms. Each country embarked on the development of new national curricula and assessment/testing policies, drawing on the expertise of foreign advisors and reflecting the best practice of many Western countries.

The Russian economic crisis beginning with the devaluation of the rouble on 17 August 1998 slowed the economic growth as well as the pace of education reform of the previous two years in all three countries. This pause was clearly evident at the time of the site visits for the OECD reviews in 1999. Yet the commitment to reform remained strong as evidenced by continued progress on national curricula, new assessment policies, development of new textbooks and teaching materials and enactment of new laws for non-university higher education ("colleges"). The countries continued to make progress on higher education reform through continued strengthening of the capacity of universities to accommodate escalating

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demand and the international expectations for quality in academic programmes and research.

Conceptual foundation for reform

As mentioned above, all three countries adopted framework Laws on Education in 1991 (Lithuania and Latvia) and 1992 (Estonia) that included similar concepts and principles. At the same time, each country pursued a different path in the development of a conceptual foundation for education reform.

Lithuania provides the clearest example of the development of a basic document, the 1992 General Concept of Education in Lithuania, which has served as the foundation of education reform and legislation throughout the pre- and post-independence periods. The Concept sets out four phases: phase I from the end of 1988 to 11 March 1990; phase II leading to the framing of the Concept in 1992; and phases III and IV (1992 to 2005) during which "a uniform, permanent Lithuanian educational system is created covering formal and informal education and an expanded network of public and private educational institutions".

In both Estonia and Latvia, the development of a broadly accepted conceptual foundation for education reform has been more of an evolving process. In Estonia, for example, not until the late 1990s did a broad consensus emerge around the concept "Learning Estonia", developed by the Academic Council convened by the President of the Republic of Estonia, "Estonian Education Strategy" compiled by the Ministry of Education and "Estonian Education Scenarios 2015" designed by the task force of the Committee of the Education Forum. In Latvia, the Ministry of Education and Science developed a "Latvian Concept of Education" in 1995, but from the observations of the OECD team, this document did not receive wide acceptance as the foundation for reform. Nevertheless, despite changes in governments, Latvian education reform has evolved on the basis of an informal consensus about the principles that should guide the country's education system.

In their reports, the OECD review teams emphasised the importance of a broad understanding of and commitment to the principles of education reform as an essential condition for sustained progress and for translating concepts into strategies and actions – especially in the case of frequent changes in political leadership. Such an understanding and commitment must reach not only to all levels of the education system but also to the nation's political and civic leadership and social partners. Whether or not the conceptual foundation is reflected in a formal document, all three countries face the challenge of engaging the society as a whole in the process of change.

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Common themes

Despite the clear differences among Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the OECD teams observed a number of common themes in education policy shared by all three countries. These can be divided between sector-specific themes and those that cut across all sectors.

Sector-specific themes

All three countries are engaged in reform of each level and sector of their education systems from pre-school through higher education. The issues identified by the OECD teams most often related to the points of intersection or transition. Examples include:

- The intersection between education and broader social and economic problems such as the relationship of pre-school education to the health and welfare of young children and women and the relationship of vocational education to the changing economy and labour market.
- The transition between pre-school education and compulsory education and policies to ensure that all young children are prepared and ready to learn.
- The transition between compulsory education and upper-secondary education and policies designed to ensure that a wider range of students complete compulsory education with the depth and breadth of academic preparation to pursue further education or to enter the labour market – and to continue learning throughout their lifetimes.
- The transition between upper-secondary general and professional/vocational education (grades 10 through 12) and either the labour market or higher education.

The following are highlights of the themes related to the major sectors.

Strengthening Pre-school/Early Childhood Education

In all three countries, pre-school enrolment dropped precipitously following independence as the countries moved away from the extensive network of pre-school establishments linked to Soviet-era working places. The need to ensure that all young children are prepared for compulsory education is a shared concern, but the approaches being taken to address the issues differ. At the time of the OECD review, Lithuania was moving to lower the age of the beginning of compulsory education from age 7 to include children in "zero" level classes (generally 6-year-olds). Latvia extended compulsory education to include pre-school education in the Law on Education enacted in 1998 but repealed this provision (primarily for economic reasons) in 1999. Estonia is taking steps to strengthen pre-school education including strengthening the requirements for teacher preparation and establishing

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new financing policies. The OECD reviews strongly supported the initiatives to achieve the goal of ensuring that all young children are prepared to enter school, but the teams raised concerns about the adequacy of resources, training of teachers and other support – especially in rural areas – to make this goal a reality. Another common concern is that there should be strong links between state initiatives aimed at improving the health and welfare of young children and women and policies related to pre-school education. In some cases, the responsibility for these inter-related areas is divided among different ministries.

Strengthening (extending) compulsory education and improving the quality of education for all students

Reform of compulsory education has been a central focus of education reform in all three Baltic States since the late 1980s. All countries moved rapidly to "de-ideologise" the curriculum and to establish the basis and transition process (curriculum, textbooks and curricular materials and retraining of teachers) for education systems in which the language of instruction was primarily in the national language (Estonian, Latvian, or Lithuanian). In the initial years, reform was largely a grass-roots phenomenon with great variation throughout the countries in the extent and direction of change. Multiple well-intentioned but often unco-ordinated foreign initiatives and pilots both stimulated reform and contributed indirectly to the lack of coherence in education reform. By the mid-1990s, however, each country moved to develop national curricula and standards and began the process of developing quality assurance mechanisms such as centrally set and/or administered assessments and examinations. The countries faced – and continue to face – a number of common problems:

- Refining the initial assessment and testing instruments to ensure that they reflect the goals of national curricula such as integration of knowledge and practice and active learning.
- Narrowing the gap between the goals of reform and the realities of change at the classroom and school levels including the need for basic instructional materials, teacher in-service education and other support.
- Increasing the coherence in the often-fragmented provision of teacher in-service education and a stronger link of the available programmes to implementation of new curriculum and assessment policies.
- Undertaking fundamental reform of pre-service teacher education to reflect the principles of education reform.
- Ensuring quality across diverse systems.
- Addressing the problems of small rural schools and severe differences between urban and rural areas in the quality and cost-effectiveness of schools.

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With the assistance of the Soros Foundation and EC-Phare and other external assistance, the Baltic States have made impressive progress in extending the application of information technology (ICT), especially access to computers and the Internet, throughout their education systems, but especially in compulsory/general education. Estonia's Tiger Leap initiative, for example, which began as a commitment to ensure that all students had access to computers, has evolved into a far broader initiative aimed at ensuring that Estonians are prepared to thrive and compete in the global information economy.

Reforming post-compulsory education (upper secondary education)

Many of the issues that relate to compulsory education (*e.g.* curriculum, standards, quality assurance and teacher training) were also evident at the post-compulsory (upper-secondary) level. A basic challenge faced by all three countries is to provide a larger proportion of each post-compulsory age cohort with a broader general education within either general secondary education schools (*gymnasia*) or secondary vocational education. In Soviet times, many academically weaker students entered vocational schools directly following compulsory education to be trained for narrowly defined working places in state-owned enterprises. Only limited general education was included in that training. Other students entered secondary vocational schools to prepare for specialised technical fields that required a broader general education foundation but generally did not prepare students further education at the university level, although some students continued in specialised post-secondary education training.

With the collapse of the command economy linked to the Soviet Union, the state enterprises for which vocational schools trained students ceased to exist. A combination of low-prestige and outdated training programmes, equipment and teachers contributed to a precipitous decline in demand for secondary vocational education.

The pattern in the post-independence period in all three Baltic countries has been to lengthen the period of general education for all students and to delay specialisation. An increasing proportion of those completing compulsory education is seeking to enter general secondary education – and, if possible, more highly selective gymnasia – which will increase the chances for university entrance. At the same time, vocational secondary education is converging with general secondary education, as countries are developing new national standards and examinations for grade 12 that all students must complete – whether in general or vocational secondary education. The increased demand for vocational education is at the post-secondary level for students who have completed secondary education and seek specialised training to enter the labour market.

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Common developments across the three countries include:

- Continuing development of national curricula and standards;
- Implementation of externally developed and administered grade 12 examinations;
- Gaining acceptance of universities of the use of grade 12 examinations for university entrance (this is in place in Estonia and under consideration in Lithuania and Latvia);
- Diversifying upper secondary education through "profiling" (Lithuania) and other changes in the curriculum to accommodate a wider range of student abilities and aspirations.

Reforming vocational education and training

As described above, the vocational education and training systems of all three countries were closely tied to the Soviet command economy. Outdated curricula, obsolete equipment and training materials, deteriorating facilities and teachers who were ill-prepared for new professions and market economy combined to make the vocational education and training systems largely irrelevant to the developing labour market.

All three Baltic countries have made important progress in reform of vocational education and training over the decade of the 1990s – stimulated by the goal of EU accession and supported by foreign assistance. The EC-Phare programme and the European Training Foundation (ETF) have played significant, positive roles in developing conceptual and strategic basis for reform and in supporting pilot programmes in areas such as curriculum development, regional training and development and teacher training. In the 1997-99 period, all three countries completed work on and enacted new framework laws on vocational education and training. These new laws establish national qualification systems, provide for extensive involvement of social partners at every level, clarify the roles of different schools, establish new non-university sectors (ISCED/4B and 5B) and strengthen the links between vocational education and training and regional economic development. Common issues faced by all three countries included:

- Moving from concepts and strategies to concrete actions. While the basic legal framework and formal policy structures are in place, all three countries need to accelerate implementation of concrete reforms. Foreign assistance has been an indispensable catalyst for reform, but implementing and sustaining reform will require stronger leadership and funding from the countries themselves.
- Establishing state leadership structures for co-ordination of vocational education and training across all ministries. Estonia and Lithuania have recently

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transferred responsibility for agricultural vocational education and training institutions from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Ministry of Education with the result that most vocational training institutions are now under a single ministry. In Latvia, responsibility for these institutions continues to be shared by several ministries, although the Ministry of Education and Science has overall co-ordinating responsibility. Developing effective co-ordination between the state vocational education system and state employment services – the entity responsible for labour market information, short-term training of the unemployed and regional labour market services under the jurisdiction of another ministry – remains an issue in all three countries.

- Optimising the school network. All three countries face the problem of too many small, highly specialised vocational schools. Each is taking actions to close or merge schools and to modernise and broaden the profiles of other schools. In some instances, secondary vocational schools, or *technicums*, are evolving into "colleges" at the ISCED/4B level and being linked with other institutions to form complexes that are more cost-effective.
- Clarifying the roles of the developing "colleges". The development of post-secondary institutions at the non-university level is evolving in each of the countries, yet there remains a degree of ambiguity about the role and mission of these new institutions. All the vocational education and training reforms have emphasised the need for a new sector at the non-university level to train highly skilled technicians for the developing labour market. All the reforms emphasise that these institutions should relate "horizontally" to the labour market and should be closely linked with social partners. When fully developed, such institutions should also provide an alternative to university-level education. Essentially two kinds of institutions are developing. First, institutions at the post-secondary level evolving from former *technicums* but not oriented toward preparation for university entrance (ISCED 1997 4B); and second, colleges offering university-level professional programmes (ISCED 1997 5B) that are more clearly linked to universities and, in some cases, are governed by universities. In part because the demand in the labour market for specialists trained at the ISCED/4B and 5B levels is still developing, many of the students attending these institutions still aspire primarily to pursue a university education rather than enter the labour market following training. The potential proliferation of new post-secondary or higher education institutions raises fundamental policy questions about quality assurance and financing for all three countries.
- Engaging social partners. The development of stronger roles for social partners in the reform of vocational education and training is a clear need in all three countries. Participation of social partners is needed in the new national qualification systems, advising in the design of training programmes, provid-

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ing apprenticeship and other work-site training and providing up-to-date equipment and training materials.

- Training of vocational education teachers. The retraining of current teachers and training of new teachers is a major need throughout the Baltic States.

Reforming tertiary education

All three Baltic States have made great strides in restructuring their higher education system since the major changes began in 1988. Changes included:

- Instilling democratic principles and processes throughout the universities.
- Establishing a new legal framework providing for institutions of higher education, university autonomy, a new research infrastructure, the framework for quality assurance and a differentiated higher education system.
- Eliminating previous restrictions in content and pedagogy, especially in the social sciences and humanities and eliminating required military retraining as a compulsory part of the curriculum.
- Carrying out dramatic shifts in academic programmes in response to changing student demands and the economic reality of the need to generate additional revenue from fee-paying students to offset limitations in state funding.
- Moving from the narrow Soviet degree structure to an award structure that is not only more flexible but also consistent with Western models and increasing expectations (*e.g.* Bologna) for common structures across Europe and the world.
- Abolishing the academies of science as research organisations, reconstituting the academies as honorary societies and integrating research into the universities, resulting in substantial gains in research and greatly strengthened universities.
- Strengthening graduate education, especially through the integration of research and teaching at the doctoral level in contrast to the location of doctoral programmes outside the universities in Soviet times.

At the time of the OECD reviews, there was growing recognition that further changes in higher education policies would be necessary. In Lithuania, for example, a new Law on Institutions of Higher Education in Lithuania was under consideration. Major issues remaining at the time of the reviews included:

- Accommodating the escalating demand for university-level education, including alternatives such as non-university "colleges".
- Tightening quality assurance requirements, including stronger requirements for non-public institutions.

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- Reforming the financing of higher education, including the highly sensitive issue of student fees.
- Conforming degree structures to international expectations as defined by the Bologna Joint Declaration.
- Developing new modes of delivery including open-distance learning and greatly expanded use of information technology throughout the higher education system.
- Seeking solutions, including strengthened doctoral programmes and international affiliations, to the problem of retraining current professors and developing the next generation of faculty and researchers.
- Reforming university programmes for teacher education.

Having granted universities substantial autonomy at the time of re-establishing independence, all three countries are now debating ways to increase the responsiveness of higher education institutions to public priorities and to ensure greater public accountability. At the time of the OECD reviews, each country was debating measures that would provide for a stronger role for the State in setting priorities while enhancing the quality, responsiveness and international competitiveness of the universities and other higher education institutions.

Strengthening adult education and lifelong learning

The Baltic states face a common need to prepare their adult populations to participate in democratic society and a market economy and to continue to learn and adjust to the dramatic changes occurring in the technology-intensive global economy. Nevertheless, the institutional network remains largely oriented to students who have recently completed compulsory or upper secondary education and is not effectively linked or co-ordinated with the labour market training network.

All three countries have expressed policy commitments to lifelong learning and established new legal frameworks for adult education, but a major challenge remains to translate these policies into concrete implementation. New developments in the use of information technology and open-distance learning (open universities) show promise as means to provide access for the adult population to further education and training. As the economies develop, employers should play an increasing role in the demand for accessible training opportunities. Other providers – primarily non-public institutions – are responding to the need, but these programmes tend to be in areas where the demand and potential for economic gain are greatest (business, law and foreign languages) and are available primarily in the urban areas. State policies for regulating quality continue to be weak and the cost of non-public programmes makes them inaccessible to large segments of the adult population.

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Crosscutting themes

As reflected in the summary of sector-specific themes, the OECD teams identified a number of crosscutting themes that are evident in all three Baltic States.

Strengthening and sustaining national policy leadership for education reform

Frequent changes in governments and ministers of education have created serious problems for all three Baltic States in sustaining national policy leadership for education reform. In face of this instability, the countries have benefited from a general consensus within education networks and among major political parties and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) about the conceptual foundations and goals of education reform. External forces, such as the expectations established for accession to the EU, have played a key role in sustaining reform. Within the constraints of leadership changes, limited resources and under-developed civil service laws, all three countries have made progress in reforming the roles and functioning of the ministries of education. Common goals of these reforms include:

- Shifting the oversight and quality assurance emphasis from controlling and inspecting "inputs" (*e.g.* detailed curriculum and curriculum timetables), toward overseeing the accomplishment of "outcomes" while allowing schools and institutions greater independence in shaping the details of implementation.
- Strengthening the professional qualifications of ministry personnel.
- Emphasising decentralisation and deregulation.
- Strengthening the ministry capacity for strategic planning and policy leadership.
- Increasing the co-ordination between government initiatives and initiatives supported by NGOs and foreign sponsors.

Despite these promising developments, the OECD teams observed that all three countries face a challenge in broadening and deepening the commitment of society – especially political leaders and social partners – to education reform as a fundamental foundation for essentially all the countries' major policy goals. The countries also all face the challenge of sustaining attention to education reform across the inevitable changes in government. The specific mechanism for addressing these challenges will be different in each country, but the leadership must come from the highest levels of government and will likely require extensive use of non-governmental organisations that can provide for continuity when government cannot do so.

As mentioned at several points in this overview, EC-Phare, the Soros Foundation and other foreign sponsors have provided invaluable stimulus and support for education reform in all three Baltic States. Foreign assistance is not a satisfactory long-term substitute for permanent, sustained leadership within each country.

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The OECD teams were concerned that, as foreign-supported pilot projects and NGOs phase out their support in critical areas such as reform of vocational education and training, the commitment and capacity to sustain reform may not exist.

Narrowing the gap between concepts/strategies and the realities of practice and implementation

All three countries have developed essential legal and policy frameworks. However, in large part because of the instability in national leadership, the countries face significant problems in moving to practical application. This is especially evident in the general secondary and vocational education and training systems in which a significant gap remains between the reform goals and the realities of change at the level of the school and classroom. The national leaders expressed concern about this gap in the course of the OECD reviews and all three countries will be giving more attention to the basic infrastructure and support systems necessary to deepen the impact of reform. Greater emphasis on alignment of teacher pre-service and in-service education and training of school directors with reform goals are examples of such efforts. As mentioned above, developing the commitment and capacity to assume responsibility and sustain initiatives originated through foreign sponsors will be especially important in bridging the gap between strategy and practice.

Addressing concerns about equity and fairness

All three Baltic States have made strong commitments to civil liberties and to narrowing the gaps in access and opportunity for all people within their countries. They recognise that fulfilling these commitments is an essential condition for modern democracies, for accession to the European Union and for full participation in the global economy. In the OECD education policy reviews, the teams underscored the need for further progress on:

- Narrowing the disparities in quality and educational opportunity between urban and rural areas (including the need for public administration reform to address the problems of small municipalities that lack the capacity to sustain strong schools).
- Ensuring that special needs students are served, including addressing the health and economic needs of young children to ensure that they are ready to learn.
- Continuing to make progress on addressing the needs of language and ethnic minority populations to ensure that they can be full participants in the civic and economic life of the countries.

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- Countering the strong tendencies toward elite secondary schools and a focus on university entrance with deliberate steps to ensure that all students – not only the most academically gifted and those with social and economic advantages – have access to quality education and the opportunity to gain essential knowledge and skills.

Recognising the impact of government reform on education policy

In the course of the education policy reviews, the OECD teams were repeatedly reminded that the progress of education reform often depends on reform of other areas of government. As examples:

- Resolution of questions of public administration reform will have a direct impact on the progress of education reform. While the specific legal and financial responsibilities of municipalities for education differ among the three countries, each faces the problem of small rural municipalities that lack the capacity to fulfil their education responsibilities. Each of the Baltic States faces fundamental issues related to the structure, roles and financing of municipal governments and about appropriate roles and responsibilities of entities between municipalities and the national government (regions, counties, or other entities).
- Reforming civil services policies. Civil service reform across all levels of government is a critical prerequisite for strengthening the policy leadership, analytic, oversight and support functions of ministries of education and other governmental units responsible for education.
- Aligning state finance policies with education reform. In each of the Baltic States, the ministry of finance plays a critical and often dominant role in education policy, yet, from the observations of the OECD review teams, these policies are not always consistent with or supportive of education reform goals. The issues are not only on the level of state financing of education, but also on the details of policy implementation. As emphasised earlier, continued progress in education reform will require leadership and co-ordination at the highest level of government and across all ministries with responsibilities that have an impact on education.

Conclusion

The human resources of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are these countries' most valuable assets. As small countries with comparatively limited natural resources, the Baltic States' future will depend on the knowledge and skills of their people. Education of all the people, not only young children and youth but also adults, should be each nation's highest priority.

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The Baltic States have made extraordinary progress in education reform over the past decade. The OECD teams were especially impressed by the dedication of teachers, professors, school directors and university leaders who, despite exceptionally difficult times, have persevered, maintained quality and led the way in changes necessary to prepare students for participation in democracy and a market economy. The OECD teams are confident that the leaders in each of the countries have the vision and commitment to ensure continued progress in education reform into the XXIst century.

Notes

1. OECD, OECD *Economic Surveys: The Baltic States, A Regional Economic Assessment*, Paris, 2000.
2. *Ibid.*

Chapter 1

Context

Geographic and historical context

Geography

Lithuania is the largest and the most populous of the Baltic Republics. With a territory of 65 300 sq. km (25 206 sq. miles), Lithuania is approximately twice the size of Belgium and only a little smaller than Ireland. It has inland borders with Latvia, Belarus, Poland and Russia (the Kaliningrad Region). In the west, it borders the Baltic Sea for 99 km.

Only 578 400 or 16% of Lithuania's population live in Vilnius. This contrasts with Estonia and Latvia in which nearly 50% live in the capitals. Lithuania has five cities with a population of over 100 000 and it is divided into 10 counties and 44 regions. The urban to rural ratio is 68 to 32. The map below shows Lithuania's major towns and cities.

Topography

Lithuania is a relatively flat but fertile country with a high percentage of arable land, many rivers, lakes and forests. Forest and woodlands make up 28%, arable land 49%, meadows and pastureland 22%.

Lithuania does not have an abundance of natural resources. It has large quantities of limestone, clay, quartz sand, gypsum sand and dolomite, which are suitable for making high-quality cement, glass and ceramics. Energy sources and industrial materials are all in short supply. Oil was discovered in western Lithuania in the 1950s and is estimated that the Baltic Sea shelf and the western region of Lithuania hold commercially viable amounts of oil although inadequate amounts for self-sufficiency.

History

The dominance and long-term ramifications of Soviet rule in Lithuania tend to obscure its ancient and proud history. Its statehood dates back to the early Middle

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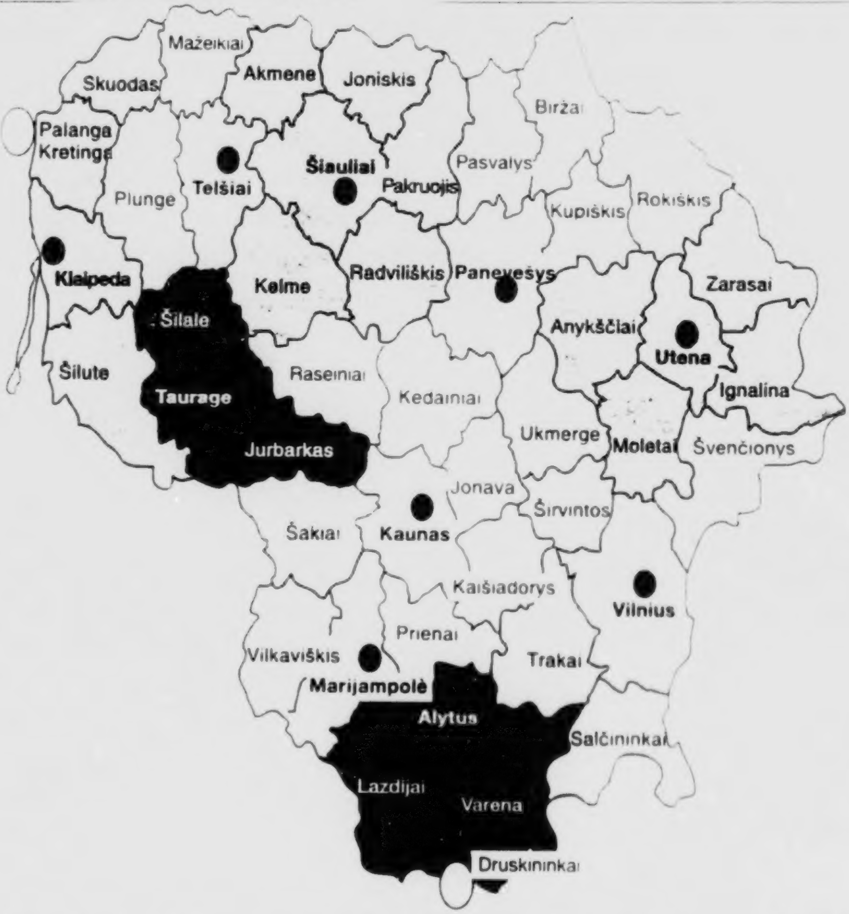

Source: European Training Foundation (1999) National Observatory in Lithuania, *National Observatory Country Report*, 1999, Vilnius, p. 17.

Ages and at the end of the fourteenth century Lithuania was a large empire extending from the Baltic to the shores of the Black Sea. For the 120 years from 1795, Russia occupied Lithuania. Under Tsarist rule, Lithuanian schools were not permitted to operate, Lithuanian publications were forbidden and the Roman Catholic Church was suppressed.

After World War I Lithuania declared its independence having fought off German ambitions of annexation. The period between the two world wars was not a tranquil time for Lithuania. It had to fight to defend its independence against Poland (1918/1920) and in 1920 lost Vilnius to Poland, which held it until World War II. Nevertheless after 1920, independent Lithuania made good progress in rebuilding the nation, it established a strong currency, sound fiscal management and undertook a land reform programme. It was during this period that many secondary schools were established and a number of higher education institutions were

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established or re-established. (Under Russian rule no higher education institutions were permitted to exist).

In 1940 Lithuania was again occupied. Under the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (1939), the Stalin regime of the Soviet Union illegally annexed Lithuania. The Pact divided Poland, much of Central Europe and the Baltic States between Germany and the Soviet Union. 20 000 Soviet troops were garrisoned in Lithuania and in return Vilnius was regranted to Lithuania. During this period, it shared the fate of its Baltic neighbours in having 30 000 of its population deported to Siberia. In the next few years of conflict between Germany and the USSR, Lithuania's people suffered at the hands of both powers. Tens of thousands were recruited or captured to work in Germany, many perished in prisons or concentration camps and around 185 000 Lithuanians of Jewish descent were massacred by the Nazis. The Russians, back in power after the war, resumed deportation to Siberia, suppressed religion, collectivised agriculture and deported clergy.

The Soviet occupation was to last 50 years. On 11 March 1990 Lithuania's newly elected parliament voted unanimously for independence. The USSR did not recognise the legality of the vote and imposed an economic blockade. In January 1991 it mounted an unsuccessful but bloody coup to remove the Lithuania government in Vilnius. This event together with the unfolding demise of the USSR eventually brought international recognition of Lithuania as an independent state and Lithuania was admitted to the United Nations in September 1991.

By this stage, a Soviet style education system was firmly established in Lithuania, a system designed to service the needs of a central command economy and inappropriate for the needs of a country aspiring to operate as a market economy.

Demography

At 3.7 million, Lithuania's population is similar to that of New Zealand and Ireland. Like many of the countries undergoing transition to market economies, Lithuania is experiencing negative population growth. Until 1990 the Lithuanian population was growing at a rate of 1.2/1.3% annually, but in 1992 its population began to decline as a result of out-migration and a falling birth rate, both of which have intensified in a climate of severe economic conditions.

Lithuania experienced negative net migration until 1996 but since then positive net migration has increased from 79 thousand in 1997 to 576 thousand in 1998 and 1 139 thousand in 1999.

In 1999 a decrease is particularly evident in the age group 0-4 and will impact soon on numbers entering compulsory education. In the 1998/1999 school year, the number of students in year 1 to year 4, declined from 223 458 to 223 271, a small decrease of 187. This marks the first indication of a decline, which is likely to increase for the next few years as the effects of falling birth rates move through

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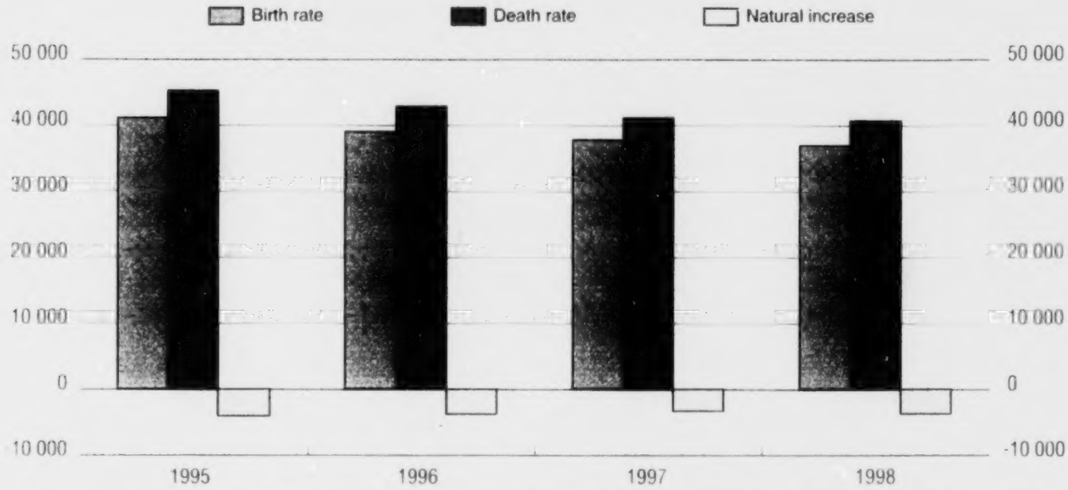
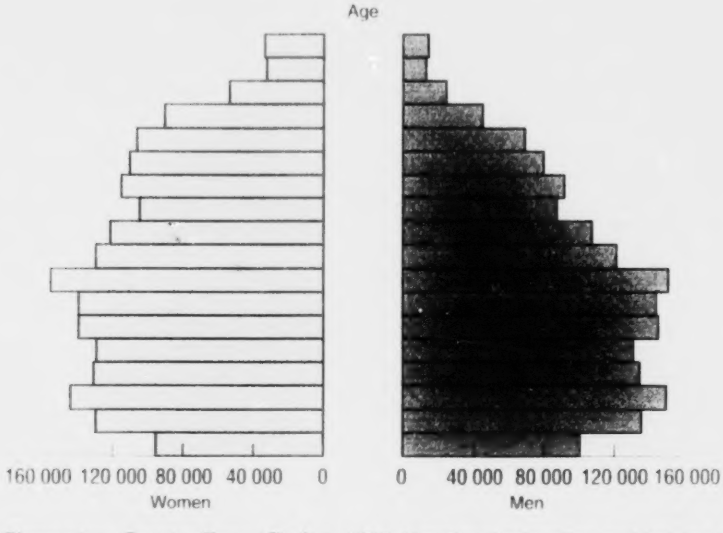
Figure 2. **Birth and death rates and natural increase in Lithuania's population, 1995-1998**



Source: Figures drawn from Statistics Lithuania, the central statistics office to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania (*www.std.lt/engl/default.htm* last updated 24 Nov. 1999).

Figure 3. **Population by sex and age, 1999**



Source: *National Observatory Country Report* Draft 1, 1999: Vocational education and training as a tool to ensure social and economic cohesion, page 12.

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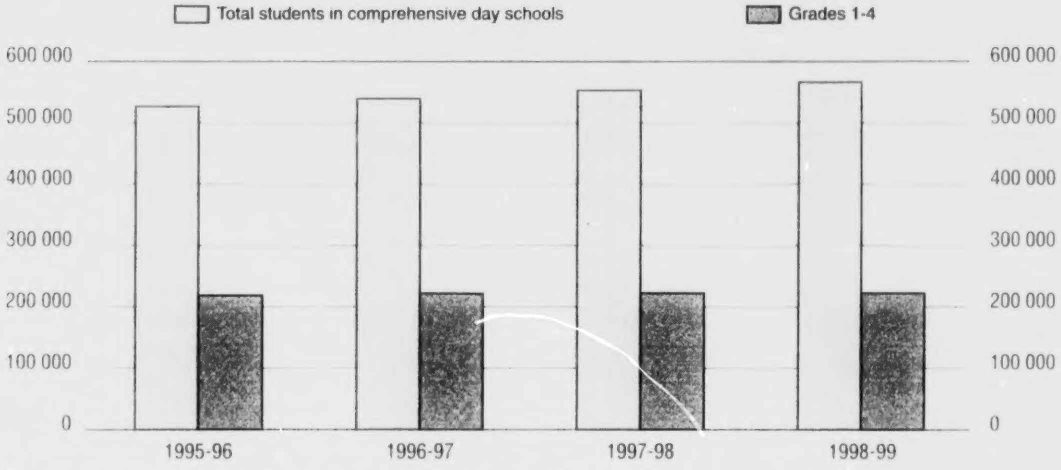
Table 1. **Migration, 1995-1999**

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Immigration	2 020	3 025	2 536	2 706	2 508
Emigration	3 773	3 940	2 457	2 130	1 369
Net migration	–1 753	–915	79	576	1 139

Source: Department of Statistics of Lithuania, June 2000.

Figure 4. **Number of students in comprehensive day schools, 1995-1999**



Source: Data from Education, Statistics Lithuania, Vilnius 1999.

Overall, however, the number of students in comprehensive schools has increased over the period 1995/1999. See Figure 4.

Ethnic and language distribution

Lithuanians are neither Germanic nor Slavic although their history of occupation and of conflict and co-operation with their neighbours has left a mixture of cultural influences.

Lithuania differs from its Baltic neighbours in its comparatively lower percentage of Russian speaking population. In Latvia, for example, Russian speakers make up close to 50% of the population. Although this situation has meant that Lithuania has had fewer problems than its neighbours in preserving and fostering its cultural identity, it does pose financial problems in providing education for its citizens in their mother tongue. In 1991, with restoration of independence, all legal residents at that time, including Russian speakers, obtained automatic citizenship.

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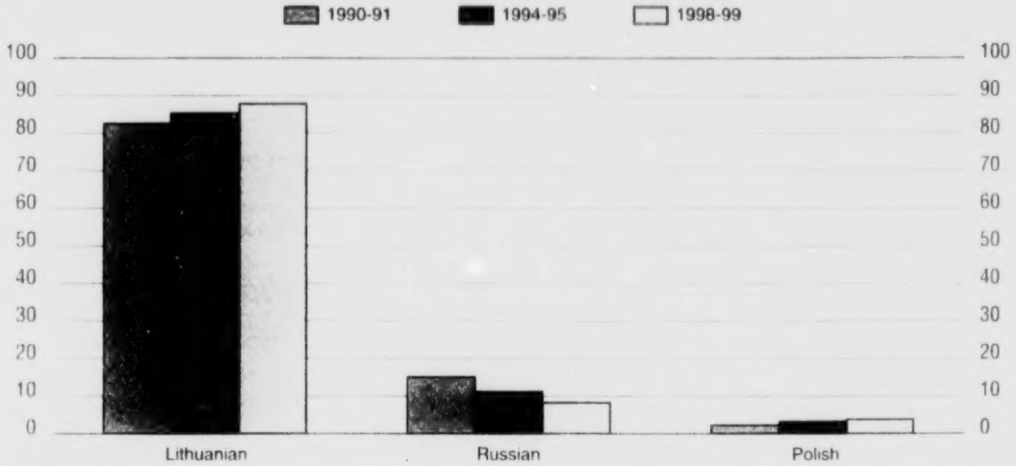
Figure 5. **Language of instruction**
By percentage



In September 1999 the estimated ethnic mix in Lithuania was Lithuanians 81.3%, Russians 8.4%, Poles 7%, Belarus 1.5%, Ukrainians 1%.[1] (The next census was scheduled for April 2001).

The official state language is Lithuanian, which is closely related to Sanskrit and belongs to the Baltic branch of the Indo-European language family. In the 1998-99 school year, 87% of students received their education in the Lithuanian language, 8.3% in Russian and 3.8% in Polish.[2]

Governmental structure

Lithuania is an independent democratic republic, with a president who is elected for a term of five years as the head of state. Its highest legislative body is the *Seimas*, a unicameral parliament, 71 seats of which are elected by popular vote and 70 by proportional representation. Members are elected for four years. The last election was in October 2000. A Council of Ministers fulfils the role of the cabinet and is headed by the Prime Minister who is appointed by the President on approval by the *Seimas*.

The administrative division of Lithuania is territorially based on 10 counties or provinces with forty-four regions (*rajonai*; singular *rajonas* – rural districts) and eleven municipalities, divided into twenty-two urban districts and ninety-two towns. Local government councils are popularly elected for three-year periods. Municipal governments are responsible for administration of local issues including compulsory education. They do not have the power to raise taxes and are, therefore, very dependent on the central government.

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Economy[3]

During the last decade Lithuania's economy has undergone essential changes in all its sectors. There were two distinct stages in the economic development of the country: the period from 1991 to 1994 was a period of a dramatic decline typical of post-communist states. In Soviet times, 40% of all industrial enterprises in Lithuania (compared to 13% in Estonia and 35% in Latvia) were linked directly to centralised decision-making body controlled by all-Union ministries based in Moscow. As shown in Table 3, the share of GDP contributed by different sectors of the economy shifted dramatically over the 1990s.[4]

The second period from 1995 to 1998 was a period of recovery marked not only by the stabilisation of the economy but also by its growth. A summary of selected economic indicators is shown in Table 2.

In spite of unfavourable macroeconomic conditions, great efforts were made to lay the foundations for a market economy in order to transform the country's centrally planned economy into a functioning market economy. The privatisation of small and medium companies, housing and agricultural land was sufficiently fast. The prices of almost all products and trade conditions were liberalised, new laws were enacted to promote the establishment of private companies and to create favourable conditions for investment. The exchange rate of the domestic currency was fixed. An important factor contributing to economic growth was the political stability of the country and 1995 saw the beginning of economic recovery.

Table 2. **Selected indicators of Lithuanian economy**

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999 (preliminary)
Annual change of GDP, % at comparative prices	–16.2	–9.8	3.3	4.7	7.3	5.1	–4.1
Deficit of the national budget, % of GDP	0.8	–1.8	–1.8	–2.5	–1.0	–1.3	–2.08
Annual inflation rate, %	410.2	72.2	39.6	24.6	8.9	5.1	1.4
Inflation during the year, % December)	189.0	45.1	35.7	13.1	8.4	2.4	0.3
Annual growth of real wages, %	–39.0	14.2	3.2	4.1	13.9	14.7	7.2
Employed, thousands		1 675.0	1 643.6	1 659.0	1 669.2	1 656.1	1 647.5
Unemployed, thousands		65.7	109.0	124.5	104.5	113.7	148.7
Unemployment rate, %	4.4	3.8	6.1	7.1	5.9	6.4	8.4
Number of employed having received unemployment benefit, thousands		18.2	34.1	35.6	21.9	19.4	24.7

Notes: * Preliminary data. ** September 1999, compared with September 1998, *** December 1999, compared with December 1998, August 1999, compared with August 1998. Data from National Labour Exchange.

Source: Ministry of Economy; Medium Term Economic Strategy Of Lithuania In The Context Of Its Accession To The European Union, *www.ekm.lt/muitai/*EKMIN/str_a.HTM#a3, Department of Statistics.

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Table 3. **Activity as share of GDP**

Per cent

	1991	1994	1998
Total	100	100	100
Agriculture	17	11	10
Industry and construction	51	32	31
Services	32	53	59

Source: OECD, *Baltic States: A Regional Economic Assessment*, Paris: OECD, 2000, p. 142

Macroeconomic stability was achieved in 1997-98, the inflation rate went down and the deficit of the national budget was considerably reduced.

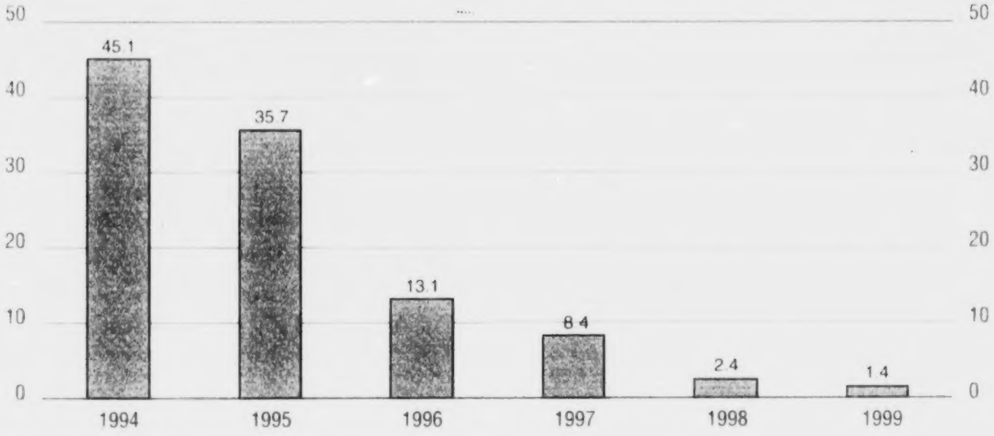
The Russian crisis in August 1998 affected the Lithuanian economy at the end of 1998 and through 1999, but early indications pointed to recovery in 2000.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) reflects tendencies of rapid growth: in 1995 the growth rate was 3.3%, in 1996, 4.7% and in 1997, 7.3%. However in 1998 it stood at only 5.1%. The growth rate of the economy slowed down due to the financial crisis in Russia, which started at the end of 1998. The stagnation of Lithuania's economy also continued through 1999: preliminary estimates for 1999 indicate that GDP decreased by 4.1% compared to 1998.

With the restructuring of industry and the expansion of service industries, the share of the services sector in value added structure was rapidly increasing:

Figure 6. **Inflation in Lithuania, 1994 – September 1999**

Per cent



Source: Department of Statistics of Lithuania.

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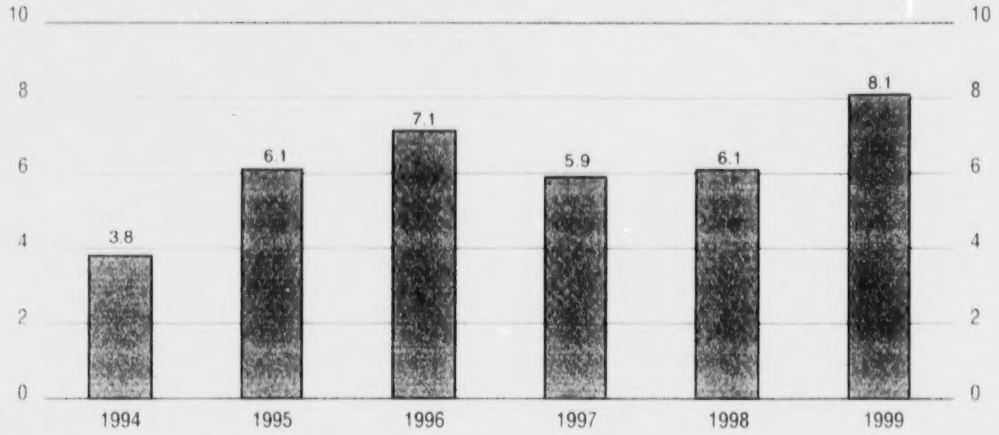
Figure 7. **Unemployment rate, 1994 – August 1999**

As a percentage of total labour force



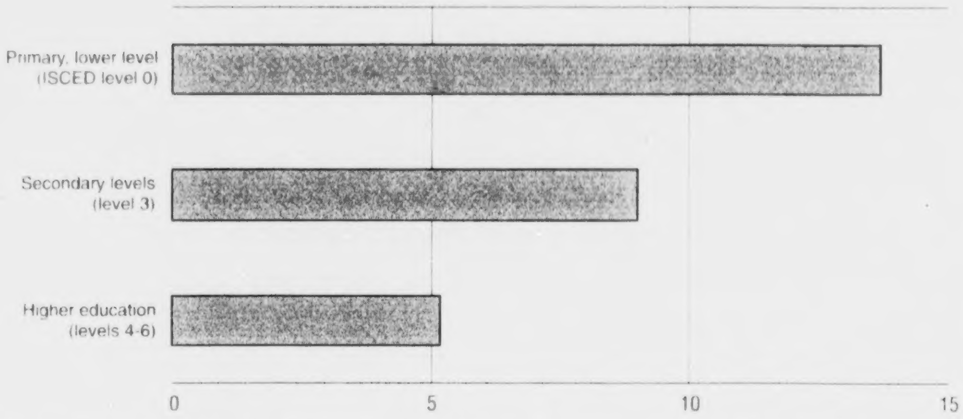
Source: Department of Statistics of Lithuania.

in 1997 it accounted for 55.4% whereas in 1998, service industries accounted for 58.5%. Thus the development of the service sector has been the main driving force in the development of Lithuania's economy.

The largest portion of value added was created by industry (combined with the supply of electricity, gas and water): in 1997 – 25.2%, in 1998 – 23.6%; trade was second:

Figure 8. **Unemployment rate**

As a percentage of the labour force (age 25-59)



Source: Markedsprofiler Litauen, Udenrigsministeriet 1998, page 11 as quoted in the EC-Phare ODL report.

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in 1997 – 16.5%, in 1998 16.1%; agriculture and forestry created respectively 11..7 and 10.1% of value added; transport and communications – 9.6 and 9.6%; construction – 7.7 and 7.9% of value added.

Since 1992, the year of hyperinflation (1 020.8%), the annual inflation rate has been decreasing steadily in Lithuania. In 1998, it was 5.1%. The inflation rate during the year (on the basis of comparison of data for the month of December) was even lower – in 1998 it was 2.4%. The preliminary estimate is that inflation during 1999 was 0.3% and the inflation rate was 1.4% compared to 5.1% in 1998. In September 1999, the annual rate (compared with September of 1998 and 1999) was 1.4%.

In 1993-98, the average monthly gross wages increased 5 times and in 1998 they reached LTL 955 (€ 265) (including the private sector). Since 1994, wages have been increasing more than prices, although their purchasing power, compared to that in 1990, has remained low. In 1999, the planned average monthly gross wages was LTL 980.

The growth rate of real wages was comparatively great – in 1997, real wages grew by 13.9%, in 1998 by 14.7%, although from 1999, it was expected that the growth rate of real wages would slow down. In August 1999, real wages in national economy increased by 7.2% compared with August 1998.

The unemployment rate increased from 4.4% in 1993 to 6.4% in 1998. Reflecting the impact of the Russian crisis, in the 2nd quarter of 1999 the average unemployment rate was 7.8 and as of 1 October 1999, it reached 8.4%.

The figures show the usual relationship between education levels and employability.

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Notes

1. *Lithuania in Figures* 1999, Statistics Lithuania, Vilnius, 1999.
2. *Education*, Statistics Lithuania 1999, Vilnius, p 29.
3. Ministry of Economy, Medium Term Economics Strategy of Lithuania In The Context Of Its Accession To The European Union, Vilnius, 1999 *www.ekm.lt/muitai/*EKMIN/*str a*.HTM#*a*3
4. OECD, *Baltic States: A Regional Economic Assessment*, Paris, 2000, p. 27.

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Chapter 2

Lithuanian Education System: an Overview

Reform process

The Lithuanian education system began to emerge from the highly centralised, tightly controlled Soviet system in the mid-1980s in the climate of *perestroika, glasnost*, the new openness and democracy movements and the deterioration of the Soviet economy and governmental institutions. These developments were accompanied by a new desire to decentralise and bring schooling closer to Lithuanian values. The year 1988, when the first concept of "national school" was created,[1] is considered to be the starting point of Lithuanian educational reform.[2] Reform of Lithuanian higher education also began at this point with the initiation of discussions about the reform in the content and structure of studies and improvement of institutional management. In 1989, many Lithuanian higher education institutions had already prepared new draft statutes (see Chapter 7 for more detailed history of Lithuanian higher education). The draft of a new Law on Education was presented in Parliament in January 1990; two months later – in March 1990 – Lithuania proclaimed its independence and systemic education reform became a focus for public debate. Laws enacted immediately included the Law of the Republic of Lithuania Concerning the Approval of the Status of Vilnius University (1990), provisions in the overall education framework law, the Law on Education (1991) and the Law on Research and Higher Education (science and studies) (1991).

By far the most important and influential document from the early stages of reform to today, has been the General Concept of Education in Lithuania. Begun in 1989 although not formally adopted until 1992, Concept sets forth the fundamental challenge of education reform:

> The restoration of statehood in Lithuania has created new possibilities for social, cultural, economic and political development which corresponds with national aspirations. Like other post-communist countries, Lithuanian society is experiencing a fundamental historic shift. This provides a unique opportunity for Lithuania to join the community of democratic European nations, fully liberate the creative energies which were repressed during the years of occupation and form a modern, open, pluralistic and harmonious society of free citizens.

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> This historic shift in national development demands a change in the mental climate of society: a basic comprehension of the democratic values, a new political and economic literacy, the maturation of a moral culture. These changes are possible only if Lithuanian education is radically reformed and given new objectives...[3]

The Concept has proved remarkably robust and remains the foundation of education reform and legislation. It sets out four phases: phase I from the end of 1988 to 11 March 1990; phase II leading to the framing of the Concept in 1992; and phases III and IV (1992 to 2005) during which "a uniform, permanent Lithuanian educational system is created covering formal and informal education and an expanded network of public and private educational institutions". By 1999, half-way through the reform outlined by the Concept, the OECD review team found that Lithuania is indeed creating a system that is "uniform" in its principles (humanism, democracy and universal access, a commitment to Lithuanian culture while protecting pluralism and renewal) yet diverse in its "network" of institutional provision.

In large measure because of the strong conceptual base, Lithuania has benefited from a broad consensus among political parties and the education community about basic principles and reform objectives. This consensus has contributed to continuity in reform despite changes in government of the decade of the 1990s. Continuity in reform has also be greatly assisted by a network of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) – especially the Open Society Fund-Lithuania, the EC-Phare Program and a number of foreign assistance projects.

By the time of the OECD review, Lithuania had put in place most of the elements of a new legal framework for reform. Major laws had been passed including a new version of the 1991 Law on Education (amended in 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997 and 1999), a Law on Vocational Education (1997), Law on Adult/Non-Formal Education (1998) and Law on Special Education (1999). A new Law on Higher Education was in final stages of consideration at time of the review and was subsequently enacted in March 2000.

With the legal framework in place, the major challenges facing Lithuania remained to gain broader commitment of society and the education system to reform and to implement changes to improve the quality of teaching and learning for all students, in all schools, institutions and regions of the Republic. At the time of the OECD review, the major priorities for the next stage reform, as outlined by the Minister of Education and Science, were:

- Ensuring the quality of education, including issues such as the disparities between urban and rural schools, strengthening the responsiveness of vocational education to the labour market and significant improvements in the rigour and transparency of quality assurance in higher education.

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- Accessibility, including issues related to disparities among regions and different populations within the Republic as well as the financing of student access and opportunity in higher education.
- Social conditions for access.
- Harmonisation of the education system for lifelong learning.
- Harmonisation (internal/external), including improving the ability of students to move from one level to another in a system of lifelong learning as well as harmonisation of policies across the government and between levels of government.
- Renovation of the infrastructure of the whole system inherited from Soviet times. Optimisation of the school network and meeting the challenges of information technology (ICT) were major priorities.
- Financing reforms, including moving to financing based on "funding follows the student".

Structure of Lithuanian education system

The structure of the present education system in Lithuania is displayed in Figure 9.

Major types of schools and institutions

The following is a brief description of the types of educational institutions in Lithuania. Subsequent chapters of this review contain more detailed descriptions.[4] The listing of types of schools and periods of study will be affected by the change to 10-year basic school now being implemented. Following the plan outlined in the General Concept of Education in Lithuania, beginning in 1999/2000 previous structure of the general education school (4+5+3) is replaced by the structure 4+(4+2)+2.[5] During the academic year 1998/99, the students did not take the final examinations of the basic education after the 9th grade as under the previous scheme. Instead, the graduates from the 9th grade were offered to either stay in the general education school for one more year, or complete the 10-year general education at vocational schools. The transfer to the compulsory 10 years education was completed in the year 2000. Also, the intent is that most students will start compulsory education at age 6. The Law on Education provides that compulsory education begins at either age 6 or 7, but traditionally most children begin at age 7. Other reforms in general secondary education are described in Chapter 3 of this review.

Beginning in 1999/2000 general education is provided by the following institutions. From the organisational point of view, primary, basic and secondary education are often carried out at the same school.

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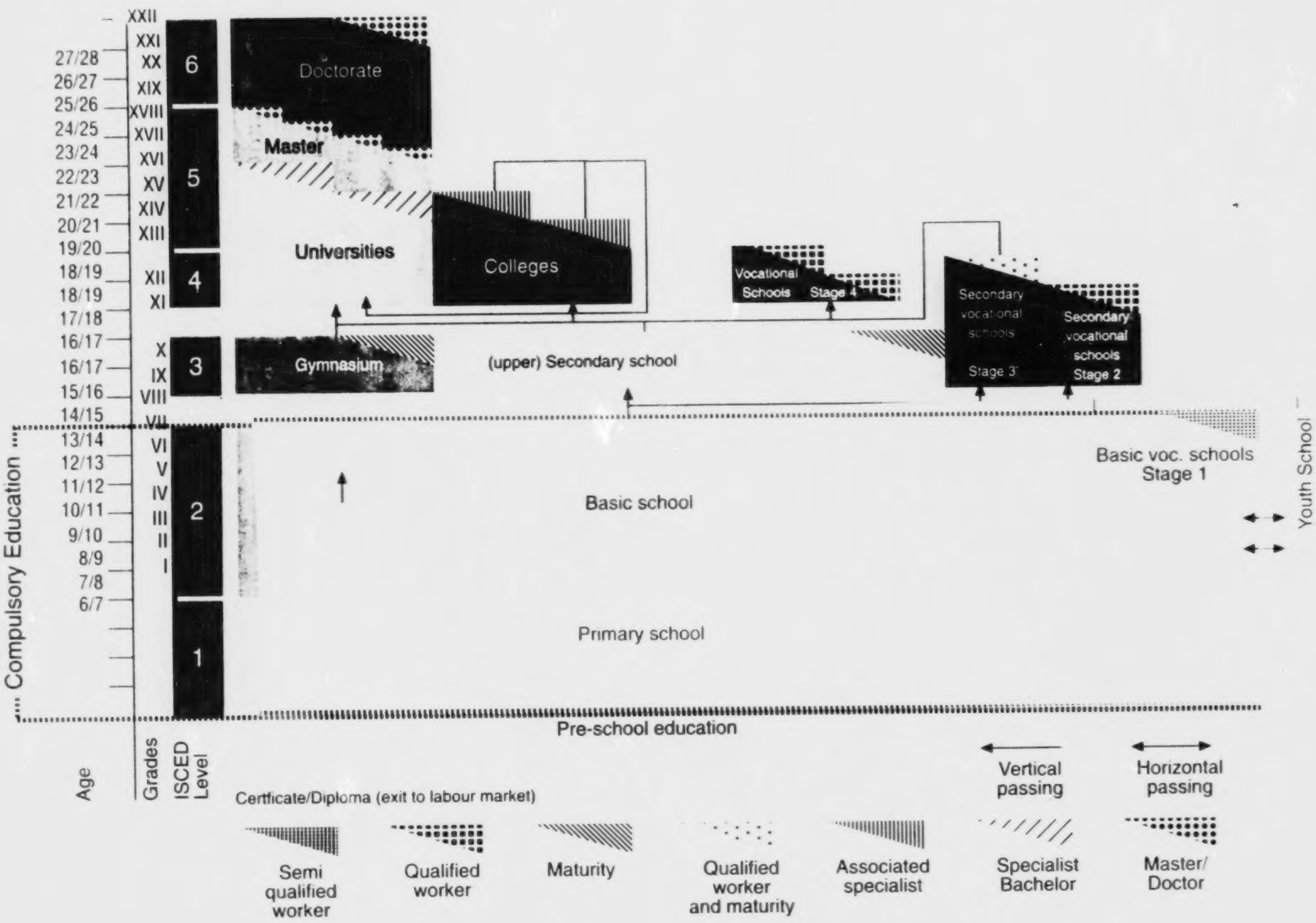
Figure 9. **National education system of Lithuania**



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- Primary general education schools grades 1-4 (6/7-10/11 years old), over a 4-year period.
- Basic general education schools grades 5-10 (10/11-16/17 years old), over a 6-year period.
- Upper secondary general education schools grades 11-12 (16/17-18/19 years old), over a 2-year period. The Maturity Certificate is issued after finishing upper secondary school.
- Gymnasium grades 9-12 (14/15-18/19 years old), over a four-year period. In the art gymnasium, students start when they are 6-9 years old. In May 1999, the MoES adopted a Concept of the Gymnasium, specifying the tasks, structure, as well as requirements to the contents of education and management of gymnasia. This Concept envisions that, among other points, gymnasia will move from elite institutions to institutions accessible to a wider spectrum of the secondary school-age population.
- Youth schools. These schools are designed for young people who have failed to adapt at school and who lack motivation for learning; the age of students is between 12-16 years. Such schools provide pre-vocational education; therefore, together with general education knowledge, the students also gain vocational work skills. However, students are not granted a certificate of qualification after completing youth schools.
- Adult general education schools (training centres).
- Specialised schools of different types.

Vocational education and training, including:

- Stage I: Initial (basic) vocational education. These programmes provide basic vocational education for students who are at least 14 years old, have not completed the general basic school programme and want to acquire an elementary speciality. Such programmes usually take two or three years. Successful completion of the programme confers a qualification, which corresponds to the second vocational attainment level of the CEDEFOP classification.[6] According to the ISCED/97 classification, the programmes qualify as level 2 programmes.
- Secondary vocational education at stages II and III (ISCED/3B and leading to a qualification at the third level of the CEDEFOP classification). After the change to 10-year basic education, it will be necessary to modify these programmes to reflect the higher level of general education of entering students. The two stages are:
  - Stage II programmes providing secondary vocational education, designed for those who have graduated form basic schools. Such programmes take 3 years, after which only a vocational qualification is granted and the age of students is 15/16-17/18 years old.

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  - Stage III programmes designed for those who have graduated from basic school and want to acquire vocational qualification alongside with maturity (secondary school) certificate. Such programmes last for 4 years and the age of students is 15/16-19/20 years old.

- Post-secondary vocational education.
  - Vocational education at Stage IV for those who have graduated from secondary schools (18/19 year olds), but want to acquire professional qualifications. Depending upon the complexity of the profession, the education lasts for 1 or 2 years and students graduate with a qualification and are ordinarily 20 to 21 years old. Specialties acquired are equal to those acquired at stages II and III.
  - Colleges at the post-secondary but non-higher education level.[7] These institutions, which evolved from former *technicums*, are for persons who have secondary education (possessing the Maturity Certificate) and want to acquire the qualification of an associated specialist. Duration of studies is mostly 3 years, although in some cases (teacher training, nursing, etc.) the studies may take up to four years.
- Higher education institutions (see Chapter 7 for definitions), including:
  - Colleges at the higher education level. The Law on Higher Education adopted in March 2000 provides the legal framework for colleges within higher education. Through a rigorous process described in Chapter 7, a number of the "vocational" colleges will be consolidated to form higher education colleges as defined by the new Law.
  - Universities and academies.

Trends in numbers of schools and enrolments

Number of schools

The numbers of schools and educational institutions in Lithuania have remained relatively stable in recent years. The most significant change has been in the increase in the number of secondary schools including gymnasia – a trend that reflects both government policy and student and parent demand.

Non-state institutions

The laws in Lithuania provide that non-state education institutions may be established, reorganised and liquidated by the legal persons registered in the Republic of Lithuania, or individual citizens of the Republic of Lithuania upon receipt of the written consent of the Ministry of Education and Science. Legal and natural persons of other countries may establish educational institutions or be the founders of joint

Table 4. **Educational Institutions in Lithuania**

	1995-1996		1996-1997		1997-1998		1998-1999	
	Total	Private	Total	Private	Total	Private	Total	Private
Secondary education (total)	2 361	20	2 373	20	2 386	24	2 375	23
Nursery schools (Pre-schools)	141	1	151	2	149	2	150	2
Primary schools	836	12	828	8	834	10	830	9
Youth schools	19	–	21	–	22	–	23	–
Compulsory schools	592	5	597	8	594	7	583	6
Secondary schools	695	1	698	1	707	4	712	6
Of which: gymnasiums	14	–	25	–	42	–	59	–
Special schools	51	1	53	1	56	1	55	–
Adult schools	27	–	25		24	–	22	–
Post-secondary vocational schools	106	1	105	1	107	1	104	1
College type schools	67	15	68	15	70	17	70	18
Higher education institutions[1]	15	–	15	–	15	–	15	–

[1] As reported in Chapter 7, three additional higher education institutions were recognised in the 1999/2000 period and several colleges at the higher education level will be recognised in accordance with the Law on Higher Education.

Source: European Training Foundation, National Observatory in Lithuania, *National Observatory Country Report*, 1999, Vilnius, 1999, p. 26.

educational institutions upon receipt of the written consent of the Ministry of Education and Science. If education at private institutions leads to an education certificate recognised by the State, then teaching at such institutions is allowed only after the written consent of the Ministry of Education and Science (*i.e.* licence) is obtained.

Data in Table 5 show that non-state institutions have developed slowly in Lithuania, except at the level of college-type schools. As described in Chapter 7, the number of non-public institutions at the higher education level (colleges and universities) is increasing.

Table 5. **Share of private schools in total number of schools**

Percent

Type of school	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999
General education	0.85	0.84	1.01	0.97
Vocational	0.94	0.95	0.93	0.96
College type	22.39	22.06	24.29	25.71
Higher education	0	0	0	0

Sources: European Training Foundation, National Observatory in Lithuania, *National Observatory Country Report*, 1999, Vilnius, 1999, p. 27. Statistics Lithuania, Education, A 360, Vilnius, 1999, p. 17.

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Enrolments

Enrolment increases have occurred in all sectors after an initial drop immediately following re-establishment of independence (Table 6). The most significant increases are occurring in the college sector (post-secondary institutions at the non-higher education level) and at higher education institutions. From 1994/95 to 1998/99, college enrolments increased 41% and higher education enrolments increased 45%. These trends reflect growing recognition of the labour market's demand for higher levels of knowledge and skill and a perception that higher education is the best means to ensure preparation for – and a degree of economic security in – a rapidly changing environment. As discussed in subsequent chapters of this review (especially Chapter 7 on higher education), these trends have significant implications for quality and financing.

Movement of students through the system

Compulsory education attendance and completion

The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania requires persons under 16 years old to attend compulsory education. However, analysis of the statistical data shows that during the economic disturbances from 1988 through to 1993 a group of people did not complete even the compulsory school. The number of people attending basic school as a percentage of the total population of the same age group declined until 1993/94 at a low point of 85.7%, but the percentage has been increasing steadily since then. Nevertheless, as emphasised in Chapter 6 on Social Inclusion, the situation remains a matter of concern. In 1998, 6.6% of children

Table 6. **Number of students in educational institutions**

At the beginning of academic year	Total students	Student enrolments by sector			
		Secondary school students	Vocational school students	College students	Higher education students
1990-1991	673 905	513 806	46 382	–	67 312
1993-1994	625 400	502 724	45 392	24 444	52 840
1994-1995	644 207	523 541	45 150	24 034	51 482
1995-1996	664 572	537 200	49 190	24 214	53 988
1996-1997	688 100	551 181	51 651	26 492	58 776
1997-1998	717 477	566 410	53 670	30 329	67 068
1998-1999	745 695	580 840	56 442	33 881	74 532

Source: European Training Foundation, National Observatory in Lithuania, *National Observatory Country Report*, 1999, Vilnius, 1999, p. 28. Statistics Lithuania, *Education*, A 360, Vilnius, 1999.

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(some 20 000) aged from 11-15 were not attending grades 5-9 of comprehensive school.

The significant number of people who failed to complete compulsory education in earlier years, as well as number who still do not complete this level of education, present serious challenges for adult education in Lithuania (see Chapter 5 and 6).[8]

Continuation of schooling after basic school

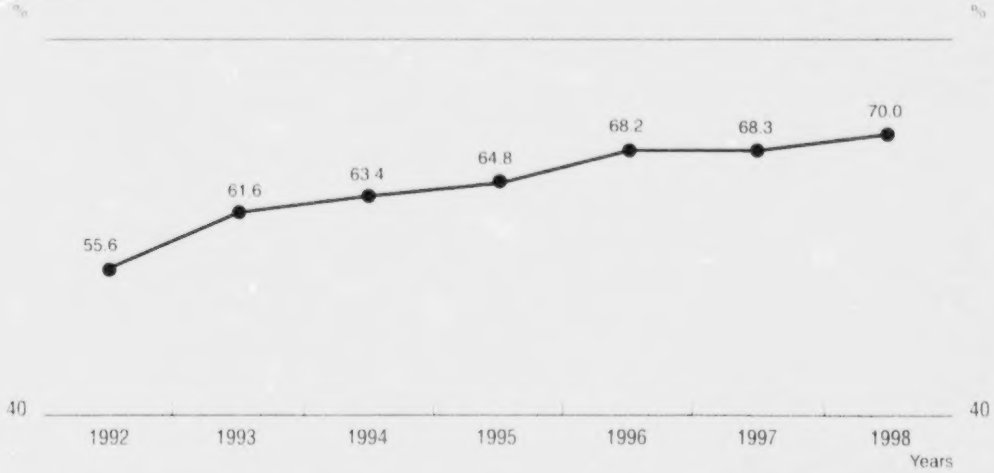
A steady increase is taking place in the percentage of the students who complete basic (compulsory) school and then continue education at the upper secondary level (general or vocational) (Figure 10).

Further education after basic school

An analysis[9] of the flows of graduates from different levels of education (Figure 11) indicates that:

- In 1998, 70% of basic school graduates entered general secondary schools and 29.4% entered vocational schools, proportions that remained stable from 1996 to 1998.
- There is a steadily increasing tendency of students who complete general secondary education to continue on to post-secondary education, but the

Figure 10. **Share of students continuing studies at secondary school after graduating from basic school**



Source: European Training Foundation, National Observatory in Lithuania, *National Observatory Country Report*, 1999. Vilnius, 1999, p. 29. Statistics Lithuania, *Education*, A 360, Vilnius, 1999, p. 22-23.

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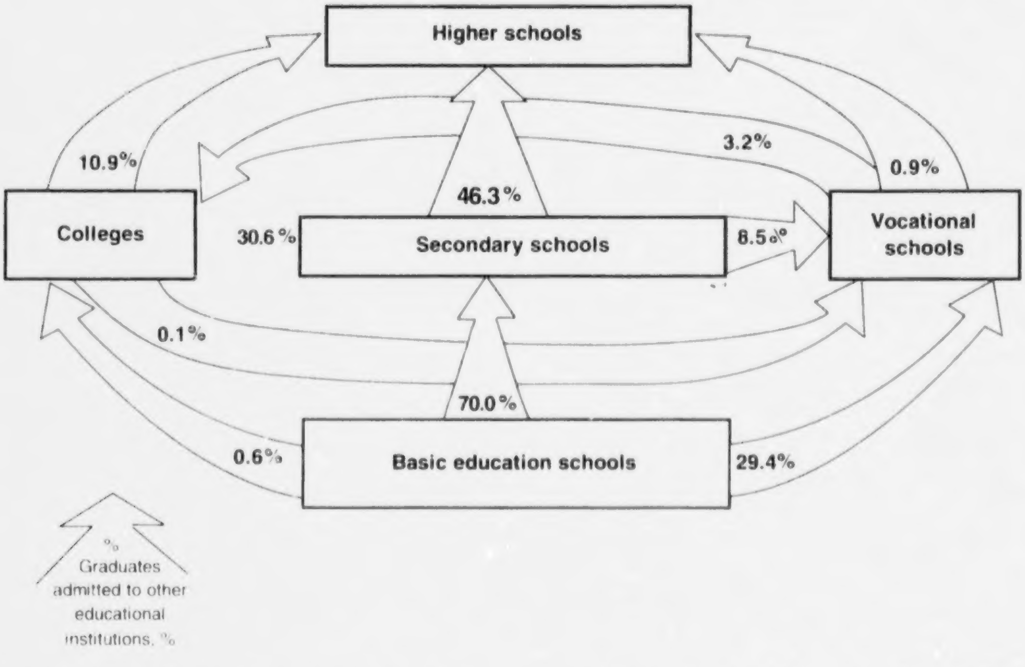
preference appears to be for higher education rather than vocational colleges (these data do not reflect the change in status of some colleges to higher education in 2000). In 1998, 46.3% of general secondary school students continued to higher education, compared to 44.7% in 1997, continuing a trend in the late 1990s. The proportion of general secondary students going to colleges decreased slightly from 1997 to 1998.

- The proportion of college students continuing on to higher education also continues to increase, moving from 9.7% in 1997 to 10.9% in 1998.
- The proportion of students who enter vocational schools after basic school and then continue either to colleges or to higher education remains small. Only 1% continued to higher education in 1997 and 1998 and 2.3% continued to colleges in 1997 and 3.2% in 1998.

While the OECD team recognises and supports the mission vocational education and colleges to prepare students to enter the labour market immediately upon completion of training, the team is concerned about the small proportion of

Figure 11. **Flows of further education of graduates from different educational institutions, 1998**



Source: European Training Foundation, National Observatory in Lithuania, *National Observatory Country Report, 1999*, Vilnius, 1999, p. 30.

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students who continue to higher education after either of these kinds of institutions – most especially vocational schools. The OECD team is also concerned about the limited student mobility between the different schools (*e.g.* between vocational schools and colleges). From an international comparative perspective, students should increasingly have the option to continue their education – either immediately or perhaps later when they seek further education after a period in the labour market. This problem underscores the importance of the Ministry of Education and Science's priorities to strengthen the general education curriculum within secondary vocational education and to harmonise the different levels and types of educational opportunity in Lithuania.

The increasing demand for post-secondary education – and especially for higher education – reinforces the importance of colleges within higher education and the development of a binary higher education system, as authorised by the new Law on Higher Education. The new colleges should provide an alternative to a university-level education for students who seek a more applied or practical higher education to prepare them for skilled professions in the labour market (see Chapter 7).

Schools for ethnic minorities

There are pre-school education institutions and general education schools of all stages for ethnic minorities in Lithuania. These schools provide children and youth with the opportunity to obtain a general education based on their own culture. Most of the teaching in these schools is in the students' mother tongue, but Lithuanian must be one of the languages taught. Upon graduation, a student must be sufficiently fluent in Lithuanian to be able to continue education, including higher education, in the official language of Lithuania.

Statistics of the recent years below (Table 7) illustrates the dynamics of distribution of general education schools:

Table 7. **Distribution of schools and students by teaching languages**

Schools where the main teaching language is	1995-1996		1997-1998		1998-1999	
	Number of schools	Students (thous.)	Number of schools	Students (thous.)	Number of schools	Students (thous.)
Lithuanian	2 038	437.9	2 068	467.6	2 066	481.7
Russian	89	42.5	82	39.5	76	38.2
Polish	55	8.9	63	11.3	71	12.4
Belarus	1	0.1	1	0.1	1	0.1

Source: European Training Foundation, National Observatory in Lithuania, *National Observatory Country Report, 1999* Vilnius, 1999, p. 34

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Table 8. **Number of students of nationalities other than Lithuanian at vocational and college type schools**

	Number of students				Percentage			
	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999	1995	1996	1997	1998
Vocational schools:								
Non-Lithuanians	6 100	6 395	6 589	7 578	12.4	12.4	12.3	13.4
Study in Russian or Polish	5 024	4 752	4 756	4 769	10.2	9.2	8.9	8.4
Colleges:								
Non-Lithuanians	3 100	3 477	4 028	5 718	12.8	13.1	13.3	16.9
Study in Russian or Polish	1 038	872	775	449	4.3	3.3	2.6	1.3

Source: European Training Foundation, National Observatory in Lithuania, *National Observatory Country Report, 1999*, Vilnius, 1999, p. 35.

The number of Russian schools and the proportion of students attending these schools are decreasing. The trend is for parents of Russian nationality to have their children attend Lithuanian schools. In contrast, within the period of 1994 to 1998, the number of students at Polish schools increased by 1.4 times and several new Polish schools were established.

In vocational and college type schools there are groups where teaching is conducted in Russian or Polish, although Table 8 suggests that increasingly more people of nationalities other than Lithuanian choose to study in Lithuanian groups.

Distribution of responsibilities

The Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) is the principal state entity responsible for education policy in Lithuania. However, the Government and the Ministry of Finance play significant roles in education policy, especially in establishing priorities and through the state budget and financing policies. The MoES and the Ministry of Internal Affairs have direct responsibility for certain institutions (essentially vocational schools and colleges and certain institutions for children with special needs).[10] These central authorities have the responsibility to establish, reorganise or close institutions under their direct authority. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour has a number of direct responsibilities related to education and training. Other Ministries such as the Ministry of Agriculture, through the Regional Development Department and the Ministry of National Economy play important roles.

The ten counties (*apskritis*) are regional administrations of the central government. The governors are appointed by and accountable to the Government. Public administration reforms were enacted in 1994 to strengthen government

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decentralisation and enhance local decision making and financial autonomy. The Government is pursuing a deliberate policy of decentralising management and oversight responsibilities to the counties and focusing the central ministries (the MoES as well as other ministries) on overall policy.[11]

The Government assuming office in October 2000 set forth an even more far-reaching programme of reform in public administration designed to reduce the influence exerted by central authorities, increase the effectiveness and authority of municipalities, and increase efficiency and transparency. Among the goals for the Government's Programme for 2000-2004 were to restructure the Government to reduce the number of ministries and "to concentrate functions of ministries on the development of administration policy and strategy" and to separate enforcement and control functions.[12]

These reforms are reflected in changes in the role and functions of the MoES. The MoES is increasingly focusing on overall policy, standards and monitoring, while oversight and management functions are being delegated to the counties. The counties are responsible for running schools for students with special needs. County authorities also run some newly built schools in eastern Lithuania, as part of the state programme to support regional development and promote the Lithuanian language. The county departments of education are playing increasingly important roles – delegated by the MoES – inspection and monitoring quality, in-service education and teacher appraisal in the region.

Since re-establishment of independence, local municipal governments (*rajonas*) have been granted substantially increased responsibilities for education – especially pre-school and general education institutions. Local school authorities are now fully responsible for the schools under their jurisdiction. They appoint and discuss the heads of these institutions and provide a substantial portion of the schools' financing for function (50% or more of municipal budgets are allocated to education as described in Chapter 3). The management responsibilities at the school level and the responsibilities of teachers for school-based curriculum have also increased. For example, school principals can now appoint and dismiss school staff, seek additional resources and rent school premises.[13]

The Government Programme for 2000-2004 established a goal to prepare amendments to the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania "to legalise five administrative territorial units of the second level in compliance with the requirements of regional policy of the European Union". The number of counties would be reduced from 10 to 5 and increased authority and responsibility would be delegated to the municipalities.[14]

Through the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania and the Law on Higher Education, institutions of higher education are granted substantial autonomy. Universities are governed by statutes enacted by the *Seimas*. Colleges established

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according to the new Law on Higher Education are to be under more direct control of the MoES than universities but will nonetheless function with a higher degree of decentralised governance than colleges within vocational education. Several other entities play important roles in higher education. These include:

- The Science Council of Lithuania, the government's advisory body on research and higher education,
- The Research and Higher Education Department, a separate entity within the MoES, responsible for overall planning, analysis and co-ordination and,
- The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education.[15]

The organisational structure of the MoES is shown in Figure 12.

The MoES was reorganised in early 1999 to create three new departments: financing policy, strategy and social policy. The new organisational responsibilities were being implemented at the time of the OECD review. The Strategy department is responsible for functions such as prioritising and implementing priorities and working with local authorities in creating regional education policy, internal and external audit of schools (not inspection, but co-ordinating regional inspectorate), links across ministries and education, international projects and relationships with the EU. The social policy department draws together responsibility for addressing social problems (*e.g.* dropouts), working with social workers, providing meals and other support services, children's rights, prevention of violence, sexual abuse, creating health conditions for learning, AIDS prevention and extra curricular activities.

Financing of the education system

National budget expenditures on education in the Republic of Lithuania were LTL 2 787 578 thousand (EUR 803 916) in 1999, representing 30.6% of total national budget expenditures (including state and municipal expenditures) and 58.5% of the total budget expenditures for social affairs. These expenditures were 6.5% of GDP in 1999. National budget expenditures for comprehensive schools represented 47.6% of total expenditures (Table 9).

The national budget expenditures for education (in current LTL, not adjusted for inflation) more than doubled in the period from 1995 to 1999. In the same period, the proportion of the national budget devoted to education increased from 21.8% to 30.6% and the share of total social affairs expenditures increased from 45.3 to 58.5%. The most significant increase occurred in 1996 but the trend has continued since then. Education expenditure increases are outpacing increases in most other sectors. Several points about these changes should be highlighted:

- Increases in budget expenditures for pre-schools, comprehensive schools and vocational colleges have outpaced increases for other parts of vocational education and for higher education.

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Figure 12. **Organisational chart of the MoES**

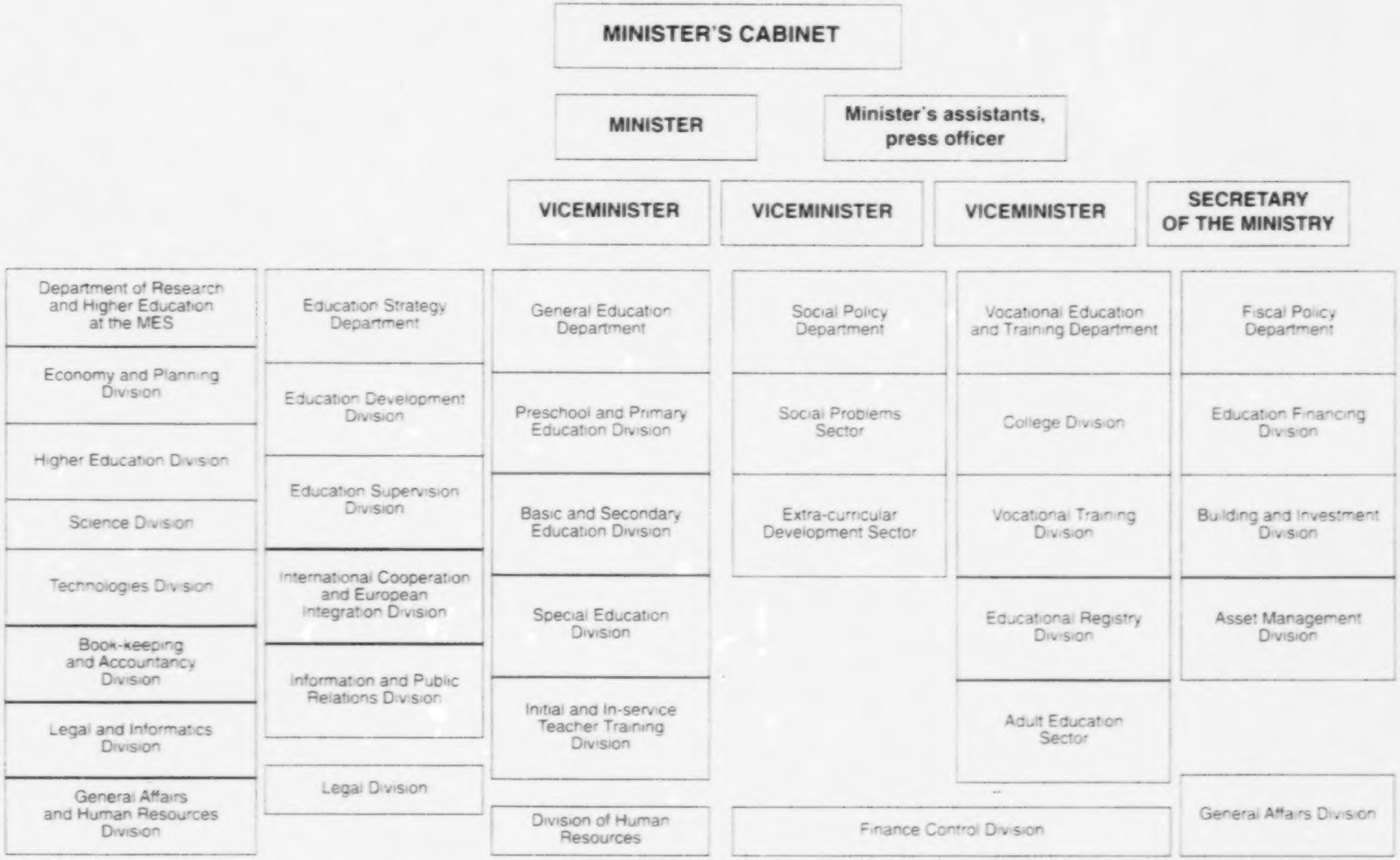
MINISTER'S CABINET
MINISTER
Minister's assistants, press officer
VICEMINISTER
VICEMINISTER
VICEMINISTER
SECRETARY OF THE MINISTRY
Department of Research and Higher Education at the MES
Economy and Planning Division
Higher Education Division
Science Division
Technologies Division
Book-keeping and Accountancy Division
Legal and Informatics Division
General Affairs and Human Resources Division
Education Strategy Department
Education Development Division
Education Supervision Division
International Cooperation and European Integration Division
Information and Public Relations Division
Legal Division
General Education Department
Preschool and Primary Education Division
Basic and Secondary Education Division
Special Education Division
Initial and In-service Teacher Training Division
Division of Human Resources
Social Policy Department
Social Problems Sector
Extra-curricular Development Sector
Vocational Education and Training Department
College Division
Vocational Training Division
Educational Registry Division
Adult Education Sector
Finance Control Division
Fiscal Policy Department
Education Financing Division
Building and Investment Division
Asset Management Division
General Affairs Division

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Table 9. National budget expenditures on education, Republic of Lithuania

	Total (thous. Litas)				Compared with total national budget expenditures %				Compared with total budget expenditure for social affairs %			
	1995	1997	1998	1999	1995	1997	1998	1999	1995	1997	1998	1999
Total	1 350 390	2 206 077	2 749 894	2 787 578	21.8	25.6	27.7	30.6	45.3	54.7	56.2	58.5
Pre-schools	179 603	321 803	398 835	402 543	2.9	3.7	4.0	4.4	6.0	8.0	8.2	8.4
Comprehensive schools	624 872	955 171	1 244 602	1 325 573	10.1	11.1	12.6	14.6	20.9	23.7	25.4	27.8
Boarding schools	75 907	121 042	143 929	142 751	1.2	1.4	1.5	1.6	2.5	3.0	2.9	3.0
Vocational schools	98 950	162 994	175 844	177 701	1.6	1.9	1.8	2.0	3.3	4.0	3.6	3.7
Vocational colleges	59 665	104 471	118 698	122 722	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.3	2.0	2.6	2.4	2.6
Higher education	176 388	320 620	384 410	351 776	2.9	3.7	3.9	3.9	5.9	7.9	7.9	7.4
Support for non-state institutions		1 832	2 426	1 677		0.02	0.02	0.02		0.03	0.05	0.04
Other institutions	72 946	112 987	150 029	159 720	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.8	2.4	2.8	3.1	3.3
Other functions	57 228	84 214	91 446	87 294	0.9	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.9	2.1	1.9	1.8

1. Other functions include maintenance of central and municipal institutions, research and other expenditures.

Source: Statistics Lithuania *Education* (2000), p. 43-44.

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Table 10. **State and municipal budget expenditures for education**

	1995		1996		1997		1998		1999	
		%		%		%		%		%
National budget expenditures for education	1 350 390	100	1 712 880	100	2 206 077	100	2 749 894	100	2 787 578	100
State	454 428	33.1	595 773	34.8	801 175	36.3	922 260	33.5	883 711	31.7
Municipal	895 962	66.3	1 117 107	65.2	1 404 902	63.7	1 827 634	66.5	1 903 867	68.3

Source: Statistics Lithuania, *Education* (2000), p. 44.

- Support for pre-schools in the national budget has increased 124% since 1995 (unadjusted for inflation) and from 2.9% to 4.4% of the national budget expenditures – a rate of increase greater than other education sectors.
- Budgetary expenditures for higher education institutions decreased in absolute terms between 1998 and 1999 and remained the same percentage (3.9%) of national budget expenditures, while the percentages for all other education sectors increased. This decrease in funding occurred at a time when the demand for higher education was escalating. These trends underscore the urgency of fundamental reform in financing policies as emphasised in Chapter 7 of this review.

The increases in budget expenditures have been most pronounced at the municipal level (Table 10). Over the period from 1995 to 1999, state expenditures for education increased 94.5% and actually decreased slightly from 1998 to 1999. In the same period, municipal expenditures increased 112% and increased from 66.5% of all expenditures in 1998 to 68% in 1999. As described in the following chapter, municipalities are responsible for most funding for general education (pre-schools and comprehensive schools) from municipal tax revenues, but the state establishes the municipal tax rates (personal income tax and property tax) as well as the salary and social security rates. Since salaries and social security constitute a significant portion (86.4% in 1999) of municipal budget expenditures, Government decisions to increase salaries and social security rates have had a major impact on municipal budgets. The impact varies greatly depending on the local economy and tax capacity of the municipality. The increases have also affected the budget resources available for other expenditure categories such as capital expenditures for renovation of the school infrastructure and other material support for schools. Issues related to financing each of the sectors are discussed in greater detail in subsequent chapters of this review.

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Notes

1. In fact, Lithuanian national schools were first established in 1397 with the founding of the Vilnius Cathedral School, followed in the 15th century by many elementary schools known as "parish" schools. A more comprehensive national education system oriented towards European culture was established by the Jesuit Order from 1570 onwards; it developed into a national secular system over the next 350 years, only to be dismantled again after Lithuania lost its independence in 1940.
2. Zelvys R. (1999). *Managing Education in a Period of Change*. Blindern, Norway: ELI Publishing. p. 57.
3. Ministry of Culture and Education (1992). *General Concept of Education in Lithuania*. Vilnius. p. 8.
4. This description does not include the Labour Market Training Centres and other education and training related services of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (MoSSL). See Chapter 5 for more information on these services.
5. Republic of Lithuania, Ministry of Education and Science, Guidelines for Reform of General Education Institutions' Network, February 1999.
6. "CEDEFOP" is the French acronym of the organisation's official title, European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (*Centre Européen pour le Développement de la Formation Professionnelle*).
7. Because the new Law on Higher Education was not enacted until March 2000 and was not formally in effect until September 2000, data regarding numbers of "colleges" and college-level enrolments in this review refer to institutions that have not been officially designated as colleges at the higher education level.
8. Source: European Training Foundation, National Observatory in Lithuania, *National Observatory Country Report*, 1999. Vilnius, 1999, p. 28. Statistics Lithuania, *Education*, A 360, Vilnius, 1999, p. 16.
9. Statistics Lithuania, *Education*, A 360, Vilnius, 1998, p. 20, 1999, p. 24. European Training Foundation, National Observatory in Lithuania, *National Observatory Country Report*, 1999. Vilnius, 1999, p. 30.
10. At the time of the OECD review, the Ministry of Agriculture was responsible for (the founder of) 40 vocational schools and 13 colleges. These institutions were transferred to the authority of the MoES in 2000. Two colleges remain the responsibility of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.
11. The Government assuming office in October 2000 set forth an even more far-reaching programme of reform in public administration designed to reduce the influence exerted by central authorities, increase the effectiveness and authority of municipalities, increase efficiency and transparency.

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12. *Seimas* of the Republic of Lithuania, Resolution on the Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania for 2000-2004, No. IX-20, Vilnius. November 9, 2000.
13. Zelvys R. (1999). *Managing Education in a Period of Change*. Blindern, Norway: ELI Publishing. pp. 57-58.
14. *Seimas* of the Republic of Lithuania, Resolution on the Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania for 2000-2004, No. IX-20, Vilnius. November 9, 2000.
15. The governance of higher education institutions is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7.

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Chapter 3

Pre-School, Compulsory and General Education

Introduction

This chapter describes the Lithuanian system of pre-school, compulsory and general education and identifies issues of concern to the OECD review team. The first part of the chapter presents a description of the different schools and enrolment patterns. The second part focuses on curriculum, standards, assessment and teacher preparation. The final part is concerned primarily with issues of governance and financing general education.

A – Schools, Governance and Finance

Types and characteristics of schools[1]

An understanding of pre-school, general and compulsory education in Lithuania requires a basic understand of the complex network of schools and the variations between urban and rural areas in their distribution and scope.

Pre-school education

The number of pre-school establishments as well as the number of children attending kindergartens decreased rapidly at the beginning of the 1990s (Table 11). This decrease occurred at the time when local governments took over the responsibility for running the kindergartens and when fees were introduced. Many families could not afford to send their children to kindergartens and some parents found it more convenient to keep children at home and to benefit from social assistance schemes (*e.g.* paid parental leave) or to work on a part-time basis.

The smaller the number of families interested in the services of pre-school education institutions, the more expensive it was for local governments to finance them. Many were closed. Local governments of big cities faced with a shortage of places in primary schools (many schools worked in "shifts"), established "kindergarten-primary"

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Table 11. **Pre-school institutions in Lithuania (T = Towns C = Countryside)**

	1985	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998
Number of pre-schools		Total: 1 681 T: 813 C: 868	Total: 741 T: 502 C: 239	Total: 729 T: 500 C: 229	Total: 724 T: 491 C: 233	Total: 719 T: 488 C: 231
Number of students at pre-schools		Total: 163 173 T: 137 076 C: 26 097	Total: 90 294 T: 81 163 C: 9 131	Total: 93 793 T: 84 385 C: 9 408	Total: 96 443 T: 86 369 C: 10 074	Total: 96 887 T: 85 717 C: 11 170
Number of teachers at pre-schools			Total: 11 795 T: 10 585 C: 1 210		Total: 12 190 T: 10 900 C: 1 290	Total: 12 277 T: 10 835 C: 1 442
Percentage of children at pre-schools compared to the age sub-group 1-7 of the population	T: 74.0% C: 33.6%	T: 49.9% C: 20.8%	T: 41.7% C: 8.6%	T: 43.6% C: 9.0%	T: 50.3% C: 10.8%	T: 52.3% C: 12.3%
Percentage of children at pre-schools and primary schools compared to the age sub-group 6 of the population			51%	55%	59%	66%
Percentage of children at pre-schools and primary schools as compared to the age sub-group 7 of the population			88%	93%	96%	94%
Of all students at pre-schools: percentage of age sub-group Age = 1.5		T: 0.35% C: 0.58%	T: 0.238% C: 0.59%	T: 0.238% C: 0.40%	T: 0.226% C: 0.426%	T: 0.27% C: 0.268%
Of all students at pre-schools: percentage of age sub-group age 1.5 < to = 3		T: 16.71% C: 18.61%	T: 10.49% C: 9.38%	T: 10.17% C: 8.55%	T: 9.88% C: 8.07%	T: 10.09% C: 8.11%
Of all students at pre-schools: percentage of age sub-group age 3 to = 7		T: 82.92% C: 80.80%	T: 89.14% C: 90.02%	T: 89.58% C: 91.03%	T: 89.85% C: 91.50%	T: 89.63% C: 91.61%

Source: Statistics Lithuania (1999) Svietimas/Education, Vilnius and MoES.

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schools. Such institutions accommodate kindergarten groups and primary classes (usually grades 1-4) in one building.

Significant disparities between urban and rural areas (between towns and countryside) exist in both provision and participation in pre-school (Table 11). In 1998, two-thirds of pre-schools and 88% of pre-school children were in urban areas. Also, 52.3% of the cohort age 1-7 in urban areas attended pre-school, compared with 12.3% in rural areas.

Kindergarten attendance is not compulsory; fewer than 12% of 3-year olds now attend and overall only 38% of 3-6 year olds do (50% in urban areas).[2] National pupil-teacher ratio (P:TR) is low at fewer than 10 children per teacher. The MoES, however, encourages attendance for 5-7 year olds in so-called "class zero" groups (see Part B of this chapter for discussion of pre-school curriculum and assessment).

Children in pre-school institutions are grouped according to age, or in mixed age-groups. The maximum number per group of children aged between 18 months and 3 years is 10. When the age-range is 3-7, the limit is 15. The minimum number of children in the institution is determined by its founder. Day nurseries are for children aged up to three, kindergartens for those aged up to six or seven and primary-school-type kindergartens for children who may be as old as ten.

Pre-school institutions are becoming more varied with, at present, state and non-state schools, kindergartens run by religious communities, Montessori establishments and full- and part-time kindergartens.

Only special education pre-schools or specialised institutions at pre-school level (for example, in art) prepare for specific kinds of primary education that are different from the mainstream. In other cases, children may be admitted to any kind of primary school irrespective of their pre-school institution.

General education schools[3]

Types and numbers of schools

Article 19 of the Law on Education stipulates that education is compulsory for all children up to the age of 16 (inclusive). Article 4 of the law (as revised), which came into force on 29 July 1998, stipulates that basic (lower secondary) school should last six years (replacing the former five-year basic school). Thus, compulsory education now involves four years of primary education followed by six years of basic (lower secondary) education (10 years in all). Compulsory education is provided not only in publicly-maintained schools of general education, but in private schools that receive state support if they adopt the state curriculum. However, enrolment in the latter is still limited (see section on private schools above).

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Table 12. **School types**

Pre-school education, kindergartens	*Ikimokyklinis ugdymas*	Ages 3-6 (nursery schools and crèches may have children younger than 3 years old)
"Kindergarten primary" schools	*Mokykla darelis*	Grades 1-4 + kindergarten groups for children Aged 3-6
Primary schools	*Pradinė mokykla*	Grades 1-4
Basic schools	*Pagrindinė mokykla*	Grades 5-9 (10)[1]
	Pagrindinė mokykla	Grades 1-9 (10)
Upper secondary schools	*Vidurinė mokykla*	Grades 10 (11)-12
	Vidurinė mokykla	Grades 1-12
	Vidurinė mokykla	Grades 5-12
Gymnasia	*Gimnazija*	Grades 9-12
Art gymnasia	*Menø gimnazija*	Grades 1-12
"Youth schools"	*Jaunimo mokyklos*	Grades 7-10[1]

1. From the school year 1999/2000 secondary education in Lithuania is extended to grade 10.

Source: Ministry of Education and Science (1999), *Informacinis leidinys*, No. 7(62).

The law states that a three-stage general school should provide general secondary education over a period of 12 years (Article 4). The same article provides for the organisation of schooling at different stages in separate administrative units (schools). In fact, the team found an extremely complex structure with a range of different combinations of school stages, often within a single institution; see the example of Utena quoted in Chapter 6, with no fewer than 12 different types of schools serving a total of just 8 716 students in 28 locations.

For the purposes of this review, the term "primary" will be used for schools covering grades 1-4; "basic" for compulsory education through to grade 10; "upper general secondary" for grades 10 (11)-12 in general schools or in gymnasia. The terms used in official documents are shown in Table 12.

"Youth schools" (*Jaunimo mokyklos*) cover grades 7-10 and offer a combination of general education and basic vocational training for students who have difficulties in following standard education programmes. A separate segment of education is arts education (music, ballet, etc.) for talented youngsters, which is organised in art gymnasia (*Menu gimnazija*) with grades 1-12.

Primary education[1]

Schooling in Lithuania has inherited a Soviet and even partly tsarist Russian, structure. As a result, primary schools are often not separated from basic or secondary schools and even some gymnasia operate both primary and basic school classes.

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Table 13. **School types**

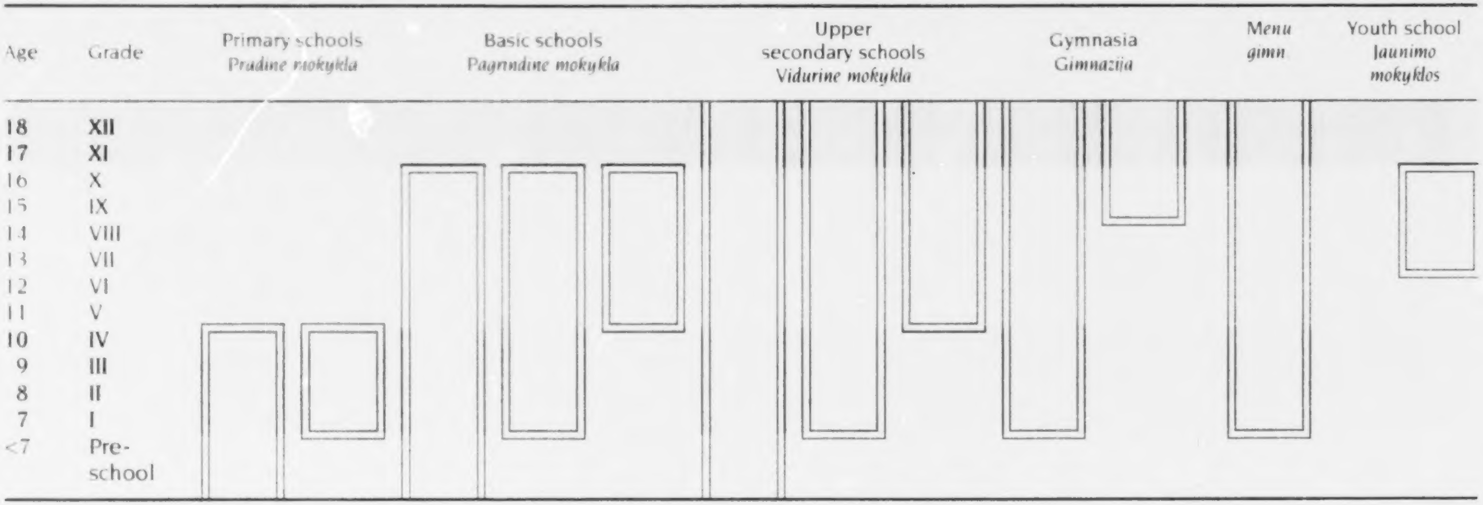

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Table 14. **Number of schools and students of general education in towns and rural areas**

	Number of schools of general education			Number of students in general education			Average number of students per school
	1995/96	1997/98	1998/99	1995/96	1997/98	1998/99	1998/99
Total	2 361	2 386	2 375	537 200	566 410	580 840	245
Urban	756	779	781	408 029	428 771	439 707	563
Rural	1 605	1 607	1 594	129 171	137 639	141 133	89

Source: Statistics Lithuania (1999), Svietimas/Education, A360, Vilnius.

Primary schools constitute the first level of schooling (grades 1-4) and initially admit children aged between six and seven. Primary education is part of the statutory period of education and is free. The general aim of schools is to prepare for the development of an educated, independent and active personality.

Children in Lithuania start their primary education later than in most OECD countries. The age of completing that stage of education is higher as well. Lower participation rates in pre-school education mean that primary schools need to work with more 7-year olds who have no previous school experience. Bearing in mind that fewer children attend pre-schools in villages, the problem of village children's preparation for school may be greater than in towns. On the other hand, rural primary schools and classes are small, which may help teachers to individualise their work with pupils.

All primary schools follow a common state-approved core curriculum and plan for teaching. However, primary education at fine arts gymnasia and special schools is normally followed by the same kind of training in the school concerned. Schools are not classified according to their size.

Table 15. **Primary schools – number of schools and number of pupils**

Type of schools		Number of schools			Number of pupils			Average number of pupils per school
		1995/96	1997/98	1998/99	1995/96	1997/98	1998/99	1998/99
Kindergarten-primary	urban	105	106	104	12 737	13 341	12 488	120
	rural	36	43	46	2 149	2 822	2 944	64
Primary	urban	78	82	84	20 853	21 642	23 319	278
	rural	758	752	746	15 977	16 132	16 159	22

Source: Statistics Lithuania (1999), Svietimas/Education, A360, Vilnius.

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Primary schools are co-educational. Villages have primary schools with small sets of up to 25 pupils and multi-grade classes. Elsewhere, schools can be attended by 50 to 500 children depending on the size of their premises. The maximum number of pupils in a single class is 24.

Primary schools operate on the basis of either one set of pupils each day or, where there are many pupils, two sets (shifts). Classes are based on the age of pupils. The primary school year comprising three terms is a minimum 170 days of school attendance. Pupils in grades 1-4 attend school five days a week throughout the year, which finishes no earlier than 31 May.

In the first year, the number of lessons a week is 22, in the second to fourth years, 23. In the first year of primary education, lessons last 35 minutes. In the second to fourth forms, they may last 35, 40 or 45 minutes, depending on the teaching plan chosen. The daily teaching workload is four or five lessons. Lessons may also be given outside the formal curriculum.

Lower secondary education[5]

On completion of primary education (grades 1 to 4), pupils move on to basic school (*pagrindine mokykla*) for their lower secondary education, corresponding to grades 5 to 9 (or, from 1999, grades 5-10). Basic schools thus normally cover the 10-16 age-group. Schools may be autonomous, operate in conjunction with a primary school, or be part of a secondary school catering for both upper and lower levels.

Data on the number of basic schools and numbers of student enrolments show that the pattern of distribution is similar to that for primary schools. Basic education in towns is organised in secondary schools. Rural schools are small – in 1998, the average number of students per school was only 97. Such "average" schools comprise five classes (groups) – one in each year (5-9). The small size of schools may be an obstacle to the rational use of subject teachers, who are in most cases prepared to teach only a single subject. The number of lessons in a given subject in small schools may be lower than the standard teaching load for teachers (18 lessons per week).

Table 16. **Basic schools (*Pagrindinës*) – number of schools and number of pupils**

Type of schools		Number of schools			Number of pupils			Average number of pupils per school
		1995-96	1997-98	1998-99	1995-96	1997-98	1998-99	
Basic	urban	37	40	42	7 108	9 416	10 397	248
	rural	555	554	541	49 607	52 401	52 740	97

Source: Statistics Lithuania (1999), *Svietimas/Education*, A360, Vilnius, p. 59.

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On completion of basic school, pupils may enter upper secondary education, a vocational school or some colleges, or go to work (provided they are aged 16). They are awarded a basic school-leaving certificate. School leaving examinations are governed by MoES criteria and may be noted in the certificate. However, after four years, when aged 14 or 15, pupils may also choose to enter a gymnasium. Pupils aged 14 who want to get a vocational qualification and find employment may also leave the *pagrindine mokykla* and go to vocational schools to complete their basic school course.

Pupils unsuited to mainstream general education (generally because they lack motivation) may, at the age of 12, after just one year of basic school, go to youth schools. Pupils from families officially in need of social welfare support can finish their compulsory education in boarding schools.

The majority of pupils with special needs are educated and trained in various schools of special education, depending on their impairment and specific requirements. Their provision approved by the MoES, includes general teaching programmes, as well as special courses that may be adapted to the needs of individual pupils. Pupils receive certificates when they complete special education, or at the end of its separate stages (modules). After completion of their schooling, pupils with special needs may also enter vocational schools. (See Chapter 6 on Social Inclusion.)

While schools may serve as many as 2 500 pupils, the establishment of a school is authorised when there are as few as three pupils. Small schools are common in eastern Lithuania, where the population consists of several nationalities, as well as in rural areas; large ones operate mostly in the big cities. The vast majority of all institutions aim to serve one daily set, or shift, of pupils, but 9.5% have a daily two-shift intake. This applies to as many as 60% of schools in Vilnius and 28% in the second largest city, Kaunas.

Where schools have two-shifts, pupils in grades 5 and 9 (the first and last years of basic school) are taught during the first shift. Those in grades 6 to 8 are taught during the second, which normally ends no later than 7 p.m. Every effort is made to ensure that regular schooling is offered during the day, whereas extra-curricular activity generally occurs in the evening.

Rather than depending on the availability of school premises, the hours of the school day are arranged by each institution with due regard for a general regulation established by the MoES.

Each school's council decides whether teaching will be spread over a five-day or six-day week, or both. The three-term school year for grades 6 to 9 lasts 195 school days.

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Post-compulsory secondary school

Students leaving compulsory school can continue their studies in one of the following institutions: secondary schools, gymnasia, vocational schools, some boarding and special education schools.

With the transition from the five-year to six-year basic school, upper secondary education is currently offered in the last two years of schooling (grades 10-12) (see below).

To enter an upper secondary school, pupils must have a certificate testifying to the completion of lower secondary education. However, as described above, in Lithuania no schools offer exclusively upper secondary education. Instead, they normally cover lower and upper secondary levels and sometimes the primary level too. Consequently, school premises for general education usually accommodate large numbers of pupils, especially in the cities. Overall, 90.5% of the 704 "comprehensive" secondary schools serving 92.3% of all pupils operate one daily shift of pupils. The remaining 9.5% of these schools serving 7.7% of the pupils operate with a double shift. The average number of pupils in a secondary school for general education is 610.

Gymnasia

Gymnasia are schools of general education with grades 9-12. "Gymnasia" existed in the pre-war independent state of Lithuania; after regaining independence, the decision was taken to restore this type of school. The idea was to return to an earlier tradition and to (re-) introduce a form of education different from the Soviet model. "Pupils are admitted according to school criteria, particularly as regards performance, maturity and motivation. Normally, gymnasia provide a more advanced level of education to academically inclined pupils than other secondary schools ... Gymnasium school leavers are encouraged to enter university-level higher education institutions."[6]

A school that applies for gymnasium status is first given the right to open "gymnasium classes". After two or three years and positive evaluation of this pilot phase, the school is granted gymnasium status. To attract the best teachers to work in gymnasia, the MoES provides a 20% weighting to teacher salaries. Gymnasia are usually also better equipped than other secondary general schools and they tend to benefit from more generous parents' support. Vaguely defined criteria for selection and admission of students allow gymnasia to accept students from better-off families. For example, the "Gabija" Secondary School in Vilnius visited by the OECD team has four or five applicants for every place in its gymnasium classes (the school has "normal" secondary classes as well). Students are selected on the basis of their marks in 8th grade. Those who are unable to meet the requirements in the gymnasium are not transferred to "normal" secondary classes. For that group, the school

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Table 17. **Gymnasia – number of students by grade**

Gymnasium grade		Number of students			
		1995/1996	1996/1997	1997/1998	1998/1999
Grade 1	towns	2 691	3 066	3 960	5 181
	rural	40	33	31	51
Grade 2	towns	2 063	3 126	3 315	4 349
	rural	40	47	30	33
Grade 3	towns	1 104	1 941	2 968	3 230
	rural	45	41	39	27
Grade 4	towns	585	984	1 864	2 882
	rural	21	42	38	38
Total		6 589	9 280	12 245	15 791

Source: Statistics Lithuania (1999), *Svietimas/Education*, A360, Vilnius.

organises special lessons (three hours per week, small groups). Gymnasia operate mostly in towns. The average number of students per school is 268.[7]

There are considerable differences between regions (Table 18). Gymnasia are concentrated in or near big towns; more than 50% of schools and more than 50% of their students are in three regions: Kaunas, Klaipeda and Vilnius. By contrast, the lowest number is found in the Alytus region, which has only two schools with classes following the gymnasium programme. The distribution of gymnasium students among regions is not proportional to the overall number of secondary school students. The lowest ratio (0.71%) is in the Alytus region and the highest ratio (4.46%) is in the Utena region. The national average is 3.1%.

The intention now is to simplify Lithuania's complex "triple" upper secondary system (general secondary schools + gymnasia + professional secondary) into a "dual" one, offering 1) comprehensive "academic" gymnasia, with profiles in the humanities, sciences, technology and arts and 2) non-academic technical gymnasia offering professional profiles in technical and arts subjects. All upper secondary schools will thus become "gymnasia, in a far more comprehensive sense than is now the case". This transformation is expected to be complete by 2010, with an intermediate stage (up to 2005), during which the present "triple" structure will continue but all three school types will introduce profiled curricula.

B – Curriculum, Standards and Assessment in General Education

Introduction

To evaluate educational quality, one needs to know not only what students are taught (the country's educational philosophy, standards, curricula, hours on

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Table 18. Gymnasium provision by region

Region	Gymnasia			Schools with gymnasium classes			Number of students in gymnasia	Students of gymnasia all students of gen. ed within region (%)	Students in gymnasia in the region to all students of gymnasia in the country (%)	Students of general schools in a region to all students of general schools in the country (%)
	95/96	97/98	98/99	95/96	97/98	98/99	1998/99			
Alytus					2	2	223	0.71	1.27	5.52
Kaunas	7	11	15	8	5	2	4 131	3.85	23.50	18.92
Klaipeda	2	6	10	11	8	4	2 828	4.19	16.09	11.89
Marijampole		1	2	3	2	1	674	2.11	3.83	5.62
Panevezys	2	3	5	4	5	3	1 416	2.90	8.06	8.59
Siauliai		5	6	7	3	2	1 460	2.29	8.31	11.22
Taurage	1	1	2	1	3	2	427	1.94	2.43	3.89
Telsiai		2	4	4	2		672	2.14	3.82	5.54
Utena		6	6	7	2	2	1 412	4.46	8.03	5.58
Vilnius	2	7	9	10	11	11	4 334	3.29	24.66	23.23
Total	14	42	59	55	43	29	17 577	3.10	100.00	100.00

Source: Statistics Lithuania (1999), Svietimas/Education, A360, Vilnius.

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Table 19. **Dimensions of educational quality**

Focus	"Outside" factors that affect learning	The context in which learning takes place	The content of learning	The outcomes of learning what can be evaluated?
System level	Laws, system design and [social] conditions	Institutional settings and finance	*Intended* curriculum: the desired situation; policy, "standards"	System outcomes: indicators of access, equity, student flow, efficiency
School level	Community, school and teaching conditions	School and classroom conditions	*Delivered* curriculum: classroom teaching, textbooks, hours	School or classroom outcomes: school quality, teaching quality
Student level	Student background and social/individual factors	Student motivation, interest and behaviour	*Attained* curriculum: what the student actually learns	Student learning outcomes: *e.g.* as measured by tests/exams related to national standards

the timetable), but also how they are taught (teacher quality, teaching methods, textbooks) and above all how much and how well, they actually learn. This road from intention via delivery to attainment is by no means straight and subtle changes happen along the way. An integrated system to assess or monitor "quality", therefore, needs not only to take account of input quality, process quality and outcome quality, but to be alert to the way these elements interact with each other and with society outside the schools. It also needs to be sensitive to whom our students are and how they will need to be prepared to live a useful life in a changing world.

Much international literature accepts this comprehensive view of quality evaluation and often sets it out in tables, more or less like in Table 19.[8]

Other parts of this chapter focus on system aspects such as the legal framework, governance, levels of authority, finance and the organisation of the schools network. This section focuses on the two right-hand columns: on the content of learning (curriculum as it is intended, delivered and attained) and on the outcomes of learning and the evaluation of their quality.

The content of learning

The intended curriculum: system level

Legal framework

The long-stagnant curriculum of the uniform Soviet school was stirred into life in the mid-1980s by *perestroika* and a new desire to decentralise and bring schooling

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closer to Lithuanian values. As described in the previous chapter, the year 1988, when the first concept of the "national school" was created,[9] is considered to be the starting point of Lithuanian educational reform.[10]

By far the most important and influential document, however, is the 1992 General Concept of Education in Lithuania, which states that "the result of education – not the educational process – is centrally controlled".[11] This philosophy has shaped Lithuania's education structure and its governance since 1992 and it explains both the extraordinary diversity in Lithuania's schools and the ministry's firm lead in the national curriculum, standards and assessment of quality.

The 1992 Concept (section 3.2) sets out core subjects and the levels (A and B) to which these can be studied in the upper grades. The present version of the Law on Education requires that all schools operate according to a national curriculum, "approved" and "organised" by the Ministry of Education and Science (Art. 31). At first glance, this may seem a continuation of the centralism of the past; but the new national curriculum is essentially a framework, giving broad guidelines but allowing some flexibility for schools to adapt it to their own needs.

Curriculum policy

Lithuania's changing society requires from its citizens new skills and a re-definition of the concept of what constitutes "an educated citizen": a self-motivated person with the ability to think, solve problems and use higher-order intellectual skills to process information and make informed decisions. The new curricula and standards seek to strike a balance between the quantity of necessary knowledge and skills on one hand and the acquisition of intellectual, social and civic "fluency" on the other. Similar moves are being made in vocational and professional education, where diminishing needs for narrow specialists have shifted the focus to more general working skills applicable to a range of occupations.

Curriculum policy for Lithuania is defined centrally by the General Education Department of the Ministry of Education and Science, with professional support from expert panels and subject specialists in the Institute of Pedagogy (*Pedagogikos Institutas*). Curriculum guides outline the objectives for the subject by grade, a description of the content to be taught, time allocations for each subject (lessons per week) and expected learning outcomes. Curriculum renewal is quite rightly seen as an ongoing task and efforts are made to co-ordinate new curricula with the introduction of new textbooks, new methods of diagnostic and summative assessment and teacher in-service training.

Language of instruction

According to the law, "the language of instruction at Lithuanian schools in the Republic of Lithuania shall be Lithuanian" (Art. 10, Law on Education). Ethnic

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minorities have the right to receive instruction in their mother tongue in pre-school and schools of general education, wherever there are "populous and compact" communities to warrant such instruction; for small or dispersed ethnic minorities, classes or optional courses and "Sunday schools" in mother tongue may be set up in general schools.

As a matter of law and policy, all secondary schools from grade 1 onwards must "ensure a command of the Lithuanian language", up to the required standard set by the MoES. This applies also to non-Lithuanian schools within the country. Moreover, the law requires that facilities must be provided for everyone (including adults) to learn Lithuanian.

The team received the impression that language policy is not a contentious issue in schools. In Utena, for example, only approximately 30 students (out of 8 671) were said to be using Russian as their language of instruction and only in grades 7-12, because younger students from Russian-speaking families are now able to follow lessons in Lithuanian.

Curriculum in schools

As indicated in the first part of this chapter, kindergarten attendance is not compulsory, but the MoES encourages attendance for 5-7 year olds in so-called "class zero" groups. School readiness criteria (1996) have been written for this age group and there is a "class zero" kindergarten curriculum[12] based on school readiness skills (*e.g.* communication and language). School readiness in rural areas and among migrant and non-Lithuanian speaking children, tends to be lower than in towns and cities; the team heard that in some areas in south-east Lithuania the pre-school year is now compulsory to encourage earlier attendance. Plans to make "class zero" compulsory for 6-7 year olds are under discussion.

For basic schools and general secondary schools, national curricula were revised and "de-ideologised" immediately after the restoration of Lithuania's independence and new types of education programmes were drawn up allowing schools themselves to control between 20% and 30% of the time allocated on each grade and subject's timetable. The curricula are intended as guidelines rather than prescriptions. The revival of (selective, prestigious) gymnasia and lycea with an academic emphasis is a common feature of nearly all Central and Eastern European countries, where they represent an old tradition associated with academic excellence and quality. The wish for choice and differentiation is understandable after decades of Soviet uniformity; since the end of World War II, however, many Western European countries have opted for comprehensive secondary schooling (*e.g.* England and Wales; Norway). The Council of Europe, too, has taken a stand against early selection and segregation[13] because they are considered socially

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Table 20 **Example of a timetable for gymnasium classes I-IV (grades 9-12)**
[S= Science; H= Humanities profile]

Subject	I-Sa	I Sb	I-Sc	I-Sf	I-Sg	L	II-Sa	II-Sb	II-Sc	II-Sf	II-Sg	II-La	II-Lb	III-Sa	III-Sb	III-Sc	III-La	III-Lb	IV-Sa	IV-Sb	IV-H
Compulsory																					
Moral education	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Languages																					
Lithuanian	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	4+1	4+2	4+2	4+1		
1st foreign lang	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2+1	2+1	2+1	2+1	2+1	2+1		
2nd foreign lang	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Latin						1						1	1								
Social sciences																					
History	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1+2	1+2	1	1	1+2
Politics															1	1	1	1	1		
Geography	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2								
Natural and exact Sciences																					
Mathematics	4+1	4+1	4+1	4+1	4	4	4+1	4+1	4+1	4+1	4	4	4	3+2	3+2	3+2	3+1	3+1	3+2	3+1	
Physics, astronomy	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2+1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2+1	2+1	2+1
Chemistry	2	2	2	2	2+1	2	2	2	2	2	2+1	2	2	1+1	1+1	1+1	1+1	1+1	1	1	
Informatics	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1				
Arts																					
Drawing	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Music	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Physical education	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Total	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	29	29	29	28	28	29	29	29

Source A gymnasium in Vilnius

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divisive and force students to make irreversible choices before their capabilities and interests are fully developed.

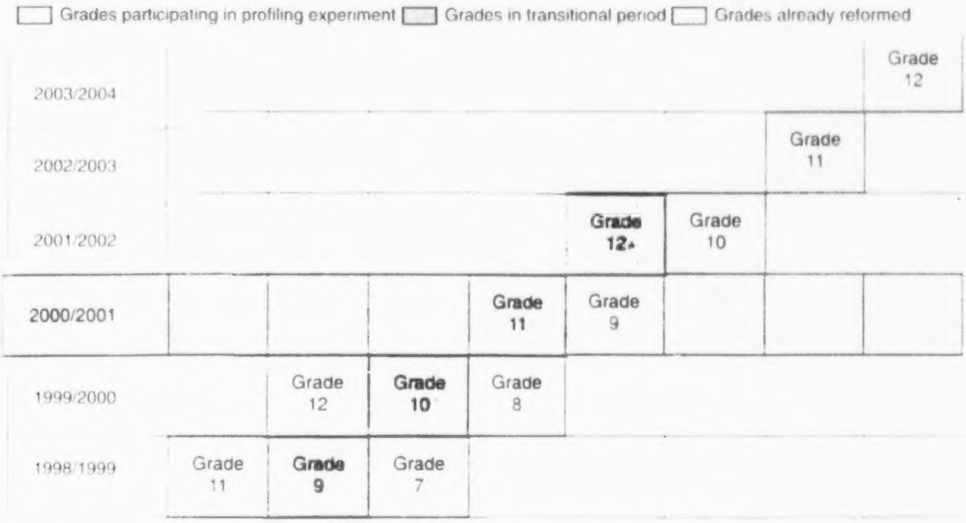
Nevertheless, as described in the first part of this chapter, gymnasium education is increasingly in demand in Lithuania and it does provide academically inclined young people with a broad range of subjects (see Table 20 for an example of a timetable for gymnasium grades 9-12, showing humanities and science profiles).

National curriculum documents

The first full set of these curriculum guides was published in 1997 (*Lietuvos Bendrojo Lavinimo Mokyklos Bendrosios Programos*). The guides are gradually being revised in a "rolling" plan that has reached grade 8 (1999/2000 school year) and is expected to be completed through grade 12 in 2003/04 (see Figure 13).

Grade 10 has now been made part of the 10-year basic compulsory school, as envisaged in the 1992 Concept (Sections 2.1 and 3.2). The Concept sees grades 9 and 10 as a time of "orientation", during which each student can begin to choose among a variety of electives and choose to study them at different levels: basic (B) or advanced (A). In reality, the levels were introduced only in the 1993/1994 school year in grades 10-12. These features have now been built into the transitional grade 9-10 curriculum as "mild profiling", offering a compulsory core plus subjects chosen by the student on the basis of aptitude or interest. Some new subjects, such as informatics, have been included for the first time.

Figure 13. **Curriculum reform 1998-2004**



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The new grade 10 curriculum is considered "transitional" for several reasons. First, not all basic schools have yet been able to add a 10th grade. Second, as part of compulsory rather than post-compulsory schooling, grade 10 now needs to serve the entire cohort and ability range. Third, the intention is to introduce "mild profiling" in grade 10 in preparation for post-compulsory specialisation. The previous curricula for grade 10 are therefore no longer appropriate, but until 10-year basic schooling is uniformly established, some variations will continue to co-exist until 2001.

Curricula for grades 11-12 in secondary schools and gymnasium are being revised to reflect "profiling", which aims to allow students to concentrate on certain curriculum areas and to reduce the number of compulsory subjects from 16 to 12 within each "profile" (humanities, science, fine arts, technology). A pilot project involving 87 schools started in 1999; trainers in all regions are to help other schools prepare for the new curricula and from 2000, all general secondary schools will start profiled schooling from grade 11. Vocational secondary schools will also begin profiling in academic subjects. The team was told that "the entire notion of upper secondary schooling is changing", with vocational and general curricula converging to the point where, eventually, all students will be preparing for the same Matura examinations (see discussion of vocational education and training in Chapter 4).

National standards

National standards (*Bendrojo Issilavinimo Standartai*) have been developed to serve as a basis for the assessment of student learning. Their fundamental purpose is to ensure that all students receive the same level of education to which they are entitled by law, regardless of where they live or who they are. Other purposes are: to specify what is to be taught and to what extent; to ensure progression ("harmonisation" or coherence) from one year to the next and from one school or municipality to another; to form a nationally understood basis for the measurement of student learning; to motivate teachers and learners; to provide a frame of reference for trends over time; to influence and help define the development of the (20-30%) school-based curricula; to guide the evaluation of school and system quality; and for international comparisons.[14]

The Lithuanian *Standartai* describe expectations at three levels: a minimum level achievable by nearly all students and necessary for day-to-day life; a basic level achievable by a majority of students, which reflects functional and social literacy and lays the basis for further learning; and a higher level achievable by the most able students.

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The delivered curriculum

School and classroom level

The team learned that the main purpose of Lithuania's national curriculum linked to national standards is to ensure coherence throughout the school system: coherence in educational goals; in curriculum design in successive stages of education and school profiles; coherence across subjects; and coherence in expectations of student learning. The great diversity of Lithuanian schools requires such common ground, especially during a period of structural reforms (1998-2010) that will profoundly affect nearly every type of school.

The delivered curriculum in schools

Schooling throughout the system is co-educational. According to the Law on Education (Art. 4, which came into force 29 July 1998), its foundation is the 10-year period of compulsory education, provided in "basic" (*pagrindines mokyklos*) or "comprehensive" secondary (*bendrojo lavinimo mokyklose*) schools.

Primary curriculum. Although primary education is usually provided within the same educational establishment as higher grades, it is seen as a separate block of four years (grades 1-4) for purposes of curriculum and school organisation. Village schools sometimes have multi-grade classes. The maximum number of students per primary class is 24. Where there are many students, schools may operate in two shifts. The number of lessons is 22 hours per week in grade 1 and 23 in grades 2-4; there are four to five lessons per day and each lesson may last 35, 40 or 45 minutes depending on the teaching plan followed by the teacher.

Educational provision is based on the selection by each school of one of four teaching plans proposed by the ministry. The Curriculum Framework does not prescribe the weekly number of lessons (periods) per subject, but this is listed in the plans. Compulsory subjects in primary school are Lithuanian language, understanding of the world, mathematics, arts and crafts, music, physical education and one foreign language. Moral education is also compulsory, although parents may choose between religious instruction according to a given denomination, or lessons in ethics. Other subjects are optional. Suggested allocations of hours on the timetable are given by the MoES for each subject, but schools also have some control over their teaching plans. Intensified teaching for talented children, for example in arts and music, or one foreign language may also be provided as part of a school's individual syllabus (*individualioji programa*). A certificate of completion is given at the end of primary grade 4.

Lower secondary curriculum. From primary school, students move on to lower secondary or *pagrindinė mokykla* which covers six years (grades 5-10). The curriculum framework sets out both the compulsory core and the optional subjects, as well as the

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number of lessons per subject per week, varying from 27 to 31 lessons or more. There are no fewer than 16 compulsory subjects: Lithuanian language, two foreign languages, mathematics, nature and man, biology, physics, chemistry, history, civics, geography, art, music, crafts, physical education and moral education. These compulsory subjects occupy 90% of the available time on the timetable. Instruction is offered at two levels: B (basic) or S (intensive). Schools offering S-level instruction often make their own curricula (*individualioji programa*) and in theory a part of the timetable can be used at the school's discretion. In practice, this does not always happen. First, the compulsory curriculum is quite demanding so that many teachers find there is little time left over. Secondly, the proportion of time available for a school-based curriculum is limited: four hours per week at grade 5 (about 14%) dwindling to one hour per week at grade 9 (3.2%). Thirdly, although every teacher knows how to construct a lesson plan, very few teachers have any training or experience in curriculum development or in new approaches such as integrated learning or cross-curricular project work. Informatics is a 68-hour compulsory course for grades 9 and 10 (see section on the use of computers in schools), regardless of the availability of computers.

From the academic year 1998/99, the 5-year lower secondary or basic school has been extended to cover 6 years (grades 5-10). The curriculum for grade 10, which used to be considered part of post-compulsory upper secondary education, had to be adapted to accommodate the whole ability range; new textbooks also had to be produced. The transitional grade 10 curriculum was introduced[15] in 1999/2000 and will be fully operational in 2001/2. It introduces "mild profiling" in that it allows students to spend more time on curriculum areas they intend to study in profiled grades 11 and 12. Youth Schools serve youngsters who are not motivated to learn in regular schools, who have had unhappy school experiences and have dropped out, or are having problems at home or with the police. Some have alcohol or drug abuse problems (30% in one school visited by the team).

Youth schools cover grades 6-10 and follow the national curriculum; some also offer basic practical skills training *e.g.* in radio technology, ceramics and sewing, so that students are more employable when they leave school. Some students return to class 11 of general secondary; the majority go either to vocational schools or to work after they reach the age of 16. The demand for places in Youth Schools is rising. (see Chapter 6).

Upper secondary curriculum. From grade 9 onwards, secondary education is the most complex phase of the education system. Demand is high; nearly all students (99.5% in 1998) remain in school at this stage. The range of secondary schools includes the classical academic gymnasium (*gimnazijos*, starting with grade 9), art schools (*menu gimnazijos*), technical and professional education (*profesines mokyklos*) as well as general secondary (*vidurines mokyklos*). In Lithuania, few schools offer exclusively upper secondary education; with the exception of some "free-standing" gymnasia grades 9-12, they normally cover at least grades 5-12 and sometimes 1-12.[16]

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Issues in curriculum

"Profiling" in upper secondary and gymnasia

At the time of the team's visit, two important structural changes were affecting the way curriculum is delivered in schools: 1) the extension of compulsory (basic) schooling from nine to 10 years, discussed above; and 2) the introduction of "profiling" in grades 11-12 of secondary schools and gymnasia. Both have major conceptual and resource implications for schools.

The introduction of "profiling" (humanities, sciences, arts, technology) is aimed at reducing the workload for students from 16 compulsory subjects to 12 and to allow students to concentrate on subjects they intend to study at university.[17] There is also an expectation that the use of specialist teachers will be more efficient and that hours on the timetable can be reduced. There is, however, a worry that profiling will lead to early specialisation and more rigid segregation between profiles, in effect restricting rather than widening student choice; there is also some uncertainty about the relation between profiling and university admissions. Profiling is being piloted in 100 schools throughout the country (1999/2000) and a cadre of trainers is being prepared to introduce the new profiled curricula to schools; all grades 11 and 12 are to be fully "profiled" by 2003/2004.

Differentiation versus optimisation

It appeared to the team that two major reform objectives – improving differentiation and choice and "optimising" provision by consolidating schools – are to some extent in opposition to each other and are creating some turbulence in the system that will not be resolved until the end of the second reform phase in 2010. During the transition, the national curriculum and the new forms of standards-based assessment will need to provide coherence and a sense of direction.

Subject-oriented curricula

The structure of the delivered curriculum remains strongly subject-bound. Among the subject working groups, there seems to be little professional expertise in modern thinking in curriculum development in other countries. Research capacity in assessing the old curricula seems to be limited and few of the experts have current experience of teaching in schools at the relevant level. The timetable for curriculum reform (see Table 21) is tight, providing too short a time for real development.

Clearly, the addition of grade 10 to compulsory schooling has resource implications for schools, especially for teacher training, materials and classroom space. By the start of the 1999/2000 school year, at least 30 lower secondary (1-9) schools

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Table 21. Weekly lessons for lower secondary (grades 5-9) 1998/99

Subject	Form									
	5		6		7		8		9	
Curriculum subjects										
Moral education (religion or ethics)	1		1		1		1		1	
A. Languages										
Lithuanian language	5-6	1*	5-6		5-6		4-5		5	
1st foreign language	3-4		3		3		3		3	
2nd Foreign language	–		2-3		2-3		2-3		2-3	
Elective subjects	–		–		–		–		–	
B. Natural Sciences and Mathematics										
Mathematics	4-5		4-5		4-5		4		4	
Nature and man	2		2		–		–		–	
Biology	–		–		2		1-2		2	
Physics	–		–		1		2		2	
Chemistry	–	3*	–	2*	–	2*	2	3*	2	1*
Elective subjects	–		–		–		–		–	
C. Social Sciences										
History	2		2		1.5-2	0.5*	2		2	
Basics of civic society	–		–		0.5-0		1-2		–	
Geography	–		2		2		1-2		2	
D. Fine Arts And Crafts, Physical Training										
Fine Arts	1				1		1		1	
Music	1		1		1		1		1	
Crafts	2		2		2		2		1-2	
Physical training	2-3		2-3		2-3		2-3		2-3	
Civil safety, traffic safety	–		–		–		–		–	
Elective subjects	–		–		–		–		–	
Overall for a 5-day school week	23		27		28		28		30	
* Number of lessons distributed at the school's discretion	4		2		2		3		1	
Maximum number of compulsory lessons for a 5-day school week	27		29		30		31		31	

Note: In grade 5, the number of hours at the school's discretion must be divided between the Languages group (one hour) and the other groups (three hours), total 4 hours.

Source: EURYDICE. The Lithuanian Education System 1998/99, Vilnius. Ministry of Education and Science, p. 16.

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Table 22. **Weekly lessons for upper secondary (grades 10-12) 1998/99**

Subject	Form 10		Form 11		Form 12	
Curriculum subjects						
Moral education (religion or ethics)	1		1		1	
A. Languages						
Lithuanian language	4-6		4-6		4-6	
1st foreign language	2-4		2-4		2-4	
2nd Foreign language	2-3		2-3		2-3	
Elective subjects	–		–		–	
Overall: for a 5-day school week	8		8		8	
B. Natural Sciences and Mathematics						
Mathematics	3-5		3-5		3-5	
Informatics	1-2		0-2		–	
Physics	2-4		2-4		3-5	
Astronomy	–		–		–	
Chemistry	2-3		1-3		1-2	
Biology	1-2		1-3		1-2	
Elective subjects	–	6*	–	10*	–	10*
Overall: for a 5-day school week	9		7		8	
C. Social Sciences						
History	2-3		1-2		1-3	
Geography	2		–		–	
Political sciences	–		1-2		0-2	
Overall: for a 5-day school week	4		2		1	
D. Fine Arts And Crafts, Physical Training						
Fine Arts	1-2		1-2		1-2	
Music	1-2		1-2		1-2	
Physical training	2-3		2-3		2-3	
Civil safety	–		–		–	
Elective subjects	–		–		–	
Overall: for a 5-day school week	4		4		4	
Total for a 5-day school week	26		22		22	
*Number of lessons distributed at the school's discretion	6		10		10	
Maximum number of compulsory lessons for a 5-day school week	32		32		32	

Source: EURYDICE. The Lithuanian Education System 1998/99, Vilnius: Ministry of Education and Science, p. 20.

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had not been able to add a 10th grade. Small rural schools with only a few students in grade 9 and a limited number of teachers, found it difficult to find classroom space and teaching capacity to teach a new grade 10 curriculum; moreover, a minimum of five students in rural communities is required to open one. As for the curriculum itself, the team found that schools interpret it in different ways. Some used the 10th year to "finish what we didn't have time to do in grade 9" rather than follow the new curriculum; others did follow the "transitional" grade 10 curriculum, but still others – especially those with a long-established grade 10, were still using the previous one".

Rationale for 10-year basic school

The rationale for making grade 10 part of basic compulsory schooling was not entirely clear to the team. The reasons given were that 1) a 10-year compulsory schooling period was envisaged in the 1992 Concept and therefore part of the strategic plan for reform; 2) raising the school-leaving age to 16 was more in line with European practice; and that 3) keeping students in school another year would help raise standards for the whole age group. However, the team found that in the majority of schools a grade 10 already exists and that drop-out at the end of grade 9 was not a serious problem. According to statistics available to the team (see Figure 11 in Chapter 2 of this review), 99.5% of grade 9 graduates stay on in school, with 70% in general secondary, 29.4 in vocational and 0.6% to college-type schools.[18] Lengthening compulsory schooling to 10 years could therefore be seen as little more than a shifting of the boundaries, except that curriculum and examination requirements must now apply to the full ability range.

Unresolved questions in the period of transition

As described in Part A of this chapter, the intention now is to simplify Lithuania's complex "triple" upper secondary system (general secondary schools + gymnasia + professional secondary) into a "dual" one, offering 1) comprehensive "academic" gymnasia, with profiles in the humanities, sciences, technology and arts, and 2) non-academic technical gymnasia offering professional profiles in technical and arts subjects. *All* upper secondary schools will thus become "gymnasia, in a far more comprehensive sense than is now the case". This transformation is expected to be complete by 2010, with an intermediate stage (up to 2005), during which the present "triple" structure will continue but all three school types will introduce profiled curricula.

The first phase of structural reforms (1998-2005) is, temporarily, producing even greater complexity. The team visited one municipality (Utena, pop. 37 000) with no fewer than 12 different types of schools, serving a total of 8 761 students in 28 locations.[19]About 800 students go to and from school by bus. The team was told that there is an "optimisation" plan whereby small village schools – some have only

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five or seven students after grade 9 – will be closed or consolidated. From 2000/01, all rural schools in the municipality will become "basic" schools, catering for at least grades 1-9 with bussing provided for the upper grades.

The team is concerned that a number of basic questions still need to be resolved. What will be the feasibility of profiling in small rural schools? Will these schools realistically be able to offer students the range of choice implied in profiling? Will profiling really reduce and focus the workload for students, as is intended? If all upper secondary schools (including technical) become gymnasia, what provision will be made to serve students in the lower 25% of the ability range?

The effects on vocational education of the introduction of ten years of compulsory education

One of the important unresolved questions appears to be the impact on the move to 10-year basic school on vocational education. For example, most three- and four-year vocational programmes be redesigned as two- and three-year ones? With this change effective as year 1999/2000, students entering vocational education at stages two and three will have a higher level of general education than before. This will require adaptation of the non-vocational subjects of the curriculum. At the time of the OECD review, the MoES had not provided guidance to vocational schools on whether the change would require changes in the length of study programmes or revisions in the general education components of the curriculum. Teaching staff of many vocational institutions visited expressed concern about their lack of preparedness for students with 10 instead of 9 years of general education.

Although the White paper on Vocational Education signals the introduction of technical gymnasia, the team saw little evidence of advanced planning for this move. There are many issues to be thought through before such a change can be implemented (see Chapter 4 on Vocational Education and Training).

Curriculum design versus curriculum delivery

There is a contrast between the broad intentions reflected in the Concept and in the overall national curriculum document, and the narrowly subject-orientated curricula and strict timetables for each grade. Few teachers seem comfortable with integrated and cross-curricular teaching, student-centred approaches, or emphasising core competencies and higher-order thinking skills rather than content and knowledge. Textbooks also do not reflect these new ideas, and remain heavily subject-specific, content-based, and too demanding for average and less academically inclined students. The Concept's vision of education for all in accordance with each child's needs and interests still has not penetrated many classrooms.

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School-based curriculum development

In theory, the national curriculum allows teachers some flexibility to develop and deliver their own curricula; it was said to the team that as much as 20-30% of the curriculum (*i.e.* hours on the timetable) could be school-specific. In practice, timetables do not appear to offer much leeway. Many teachers find it difficult to cover the compulsory core content in the time available; moreover, they have little experience in curriculum development, and the impression is that teachers get little support either from the school inspectorate or from in-service training to make the best use of whatever flexibility the tight timetables allow.

Recommendations regarding curriculum

- Emphasise integrated and cross-curricular teaching and learning. The present structure of the curriculum and its assessment remain strongly subject-bound.
- Assist teachers to make better use of the portion of the curriculum that schools can develop themselves (said to be 10-25% of available hours).
- Clarify the rationale for extending compulsory schooling to 10 years, and adjust grade 10 curricula to suit the entire ability range, not only those students who are academically inclined. The impact of the move to compulsory grade 10 on three- and four-year vocational programmes should also be clarified.
- Review the implications of "profiling"; especially *a)* the feasibility of introducing it in small rural schools, and *b)* the risk that even in large urban schools students may find they cannot choose subjects "across profiles", because their schools segregate subjects strictly along profile lines.

Textbooks

Curriculum development, the publishing of standard textbooks for all school subjects and ensuring that these are distributed, are the responsibilities of the MoES (Art. 31(6), Law on Education). Textbooks are now said to be better matched to the new curricula, but teachers complain they are still too fact-laden, uneven in quality, and unco-ordinated in their treatment of some key concepts, not giving enough emphasis to practical work or to higher competencies such as analytical skills and application.

The Ministry Publishing Centre (*Svietimo ir Mokslo Ministerijos Leidybos Centras*), founded in 1990 and reorganised into Education Resource Centre (*vietimo aprupinimo centras*) in 1999 has several functions, the basic one being responsibility for the organisation of textbook publishing, *i.e.* determining the number of books to be printed,

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Table 23. **Publication of textbooks, 1991-1999**

	No. of titles, all grades[1]	Of these				New titles all grades	Of these				Books (000)	MoES cost in LTL (000)
		Lith	Russ	Pol	Special		Lith	Russ	Pol	Special		
1991	93	67	2	20	4	38	22	1	12	3	2 100	795
1995	111	61	16	28	6	71	39	11	16	5	2 600	9 500
1998	117	79	16	17	5	74	43	12	14	5	1 305.7	15 700
1999	177	135	19	14	9	60	29	13	9	9	1 106.3	13 540

[1] Not broken down between primary and secondary grades. The team discovered no explicit rationale for how many titles there should be for each subject at each grade level.

Source: Interview with Ministry Education Resource centre staff, Vilnius, 25/10/99.

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putting publishing contracts out to bid, financing the printing, and overseeing the distribution of textbooks (by a separate non-state distribution agency also reorganised at the end of 1999). Textbook publishing as such is entirely in the hands of private publishing companies[20] who bid for contracts according to a complex set of requirements approved by the ministry and controlled by the Centre.

In its early days, the main function of the Centre was to translate Russian textbooks into Lithuanian, and money was made available to print 160% of the anticipated number of books needed for schools. But soon after independence new textbooks came on stream each year, starting with grade 1. Funding remained centralised, but the number of books printed was roughly equal to the number of students plus a small second edition if needed. In 1997 and 1998, print runs remained at approximately 100% of anticipated needs, but municipalities received a list of textbooks and a certain amount of money to purchase the books through the Centre.

In 1999, the system was again changed; money for books is now distributed among municipalities on the basis of the number of students, allocating roughly LTL 20 (€ 5.55) per student. (Total allocation: LTL 12.6 million (€ 3 496 942) for 600 000 students, with a small reserve left for the MoES to subsidise small runs and books for linguistic minorities). Since LTL 20 is barely enough to cover the price of a single secondary school textbook, the new system has created a number of problems, not least of which is the necessity for parents to pay a substantial amount of money (approximately LTL 150 (€ 41.6) per child per year) for the purchase of core textbooks in addition to the usual exercise books and study guides their children need.

Schools are expected to use their allocations for textbooks by placing orders with the Publishing Centre, after which the Centre enters into contracts with publishers to provide quantities according to these advance orders. It is clear that schools can no longer afford to order all the books they need; in 1998, for example, only 70% of the estimated need for a new biology textbook was reflected in actual orders from schools, and in 1999 the Centre received orders for only 65% of estimated overall needs. For example, 50 000 fifth graders study history, but only 30 000 books were ordered in 1998. The Centre considers that this represents a notional "shortage" of 20 000 books. The team suspects this "shortage" reflects re-use of books, rather than any real scarcity. Of some concern is that of the 177 textbooks planned for the 1999/2000 school year, only 132 had been produced by September 1999; 14 more titles had been printed, but were not released by publishers because of payment delays (see below); the remaining titles were not available at all.

School libraries keep books for four years. This means that books published four years ago are still being used in schools; they are also cheaper than the new ones, and therefore many schools and students continue to use them regardless

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Table 24. **1999/2000 Publication of [new] textbooks**

Rank	Publisher	No. of titles contracted	Total print run	Total estimated cost (Lt)
1.	Sviesa (former state textbook house)	77	380 800	4 725 693
2.	Alma Littera	24	178 970	2 743 648
3.	TEV	9	208 100	1 338 181
4.	Kronta	6	78 800	1 030 945
5.	Vaga	5	74 900	915 480
6.	Gimtasis zodis	6	38 000	573 940
7.	Uzsienio leidyklos	13	37 300	466 194
8.	Briedis	4	23 300	323 626
9.	Katechetai	4	16 500	164 730
10.	Ziburys	2	8 000	135 200
11.	Amzius	3	11 600	117 668
12.	Presvika	3	3 310	96 081
13.	Leidybos centras	4	11 000	104 766
14.	Regnum	1	8 000	79 200
15.	Homo libera	1	7 300	62 269
16.	Danielius	2	11 750	49 605
17.	Meralas	1	2 500	25 300
18.	Baltos lankos	1	2 300	24 495
	Total	166	1 102 430	12 977 022

Source: MoES Publishing Centre, 1999.

of curriculum changes. In some subjects this may matter less than in others; but at this time of substantial curriculum reforms, there could soon be a mismatch between curriculum expectations and classroom practice.

Issues related to textbooks

The process whereby textbooks and other educational materials become available to schools is extremely complex, slow, and unmanageable. It involves no fewer than 35 separate steps, starting with expert subject committees screening proposals from authors and publishers, through a three-step preliminary approval procedure involving approximately ten specialists serving on each subject panel (30 panels in total) to the creation of a preliminary list of possible titles (with summaries and annotations) so that municipal authorities can consult with schools and collect orders for the Centre. On the basis of these, the Centre then calculates print runs, prices and publishing plans. A new textbook is published if at least 10 000 orders are received for it. Contracts are then put out to public tender. Publishers are responsible for printing and delivering the books to a central warehouse, from where a non-state agency takes care of distribution to schools and school libraries. The Centre is responsible for collecting the money from municipalities as well as the LTL 20 per student allocated by the ministry and for settling the accounts with publishers.[21] Formally, the

MoES is bound to advance 50% of the contract to the winning publisher, but often lacks the funds to do so. Because of such payment difficulties, some publishers now will not release the books until the ministry pays them in full, including storage expenses, which drives up the cost of the books.

The 35-step procedure takes (at best) a year to complete, and involves a large number of people producing large amounts of paperwork. The sequence of steps also appears counter-productive; collecting (insufficient) orders before placing the contract for the actual print run, and then fixing the price on the basis of these preliminary orders. More seriously, the system is an uneasy combination of central control and a free market, without the advantages of either.

Conflicts of interest and "insider dealing" occur throughout the system. Some members of expert panels are textbook authors themselves, or have interests in the publishing business. Also, although the competition for textbook contracts is publicly announced by the MoES according to rules set by the Public Procurement Agency, often only one publishing house submits a bid, and price-fixing is not unknown.[22] Once the price of the book is fixed, publishers sometimes print additional copies themselves and offer these through bookshops and kiosks before the main run arrives at the Publishing Centre and the schools. One publisher admitted to selling 5% of total volume through bookshops and encouraging schools to place orders directly rather than through the Centre, thereby assuring the schools of quick delivery and a small "discount" as well as helping the publisher recover costs more quickly. This shows that "shortages" reported to the team are to some extent artificial: the market is larger than the volume handled by the Publishing Centre, and some school sponsors or parents are already banding together to buy the books directly from the publishers at wholesale prices. Publishers say they are ready to compete in a free market, but are unwilling or unable to wait for long periods before being paid.

The team was told that distribution will become the responsibility of publishers rather than the present agency, and there is some concern that this is likely to increase the cost of books, since many textbook publishers are small and have no warehousing and distribution system of their own; postal services are expensive, and in practice some books may not be available throughout the country. If the textbook market is liberalised, as suggested above, some small publishers may not be able to compete. However, the publishers say they prefer liberalisation, are confident they can find a sensible solution to the distribution issue. (And if paying the going rate for distribution does put up the cost of books, this simply means that there were covert subsidies in the present system!) The MoES offers an explanation that the subsidies for distribution were coming from municipalities therefore were not reflected as centralised. They equalled to 10-16% of the total textbook price. With the direct distribution system (publisher-municipality) introduced in 2000, this will only be 6%.

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Publishers will, however, need to improve their communication with schools. For teachers and students in rural areas, there is still little effective choice among alternative textbooks. Teachers complain that it is impossible to judge the suitability and quality of a proposed textbook from the 10-20 line summaries sent out by the publishers; publishers in turn complain that teachers show little interest in innovative approaches, often preventing the publication of a good textbook because the total number of orders falls short of the minimum required by the MoES.

Textbook authors and subject committees still focus on narrowly subject-bound content coverage rather than on integrated approaches to learning, or on stimulating the kind of higher-level thinking skills, problem-solving and independent judgement implicit in the design of the new national curriculum, national standards and examinations.

Recommendations related to textbooks

- Create urgently a textbook policy for Lithuania. There should be a national forum involving both the public and private sectors to develop one.
- Reconsider and drastically streamline (or gradually abolish, see below) the 35-step textbook provision procedure. There must be a better and more responsive way to make sure that students and teachers have access to a choice of textbooks of good quality, linked to the national curriculum, national standards and new assessment requirements and at a reasonable price.
- Consider whether the MoES should be so heavily involved in order taking, money collection, price fixing and payment to publishers, when in fact its financial contribution is less than 14%. No doubt the private sector would take over the entire process if given the chance; it might need to leave behind some vestigial approval mechanism, but there is no evidence that this would lead to "bad" books getting into the system.
- At the very least, consider whether the MoES's contribution to the cost of textbooks (at present approximately LTL 20 per year per student, *i.e.* approximately 14% of the LTL 150 average actual cost) could be better targeted or weighted in favour of poorer districts. Giving 14% to all students might be less equitable than targeting the available government subsidy (LTL 13.5 million [€ 3 893 295 million] in 1999) on those who need it most.
- Observe practice in other transition countries, where the issue of textbook financing and distribution has been resolved in different ways. Romania, for example, uses a compromise system whereby private publishers submit accurate "dummy" copies of their proposed books and compete for contracts, awarded by a Textbook Approvals Board on the recommendation of independent panels of evaluators. Successful publishers must then produce a sufficient number of the actual books[23] to be sent around the country in

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book exhibitions where teachers can see the books before placing their order with the publishers. A system to provide free books to needy students is being developed. In Poland and FYRoM, students buy their books from bookshops; in Latvia and Estonia, small decentralised sums are available for book purchases and the state no longer has a central role. Other countries (*e.g.* Moldova) are using a book rental scheme whereby parents pay only for one year's use of a book (*e.g.* 25% of the cost of a book with a four-year life-span) and then return the books to the school.

- Book re-use will surely be an essential part of the system for years to come. If a rental scheme is introduced in Lithuania, this will only work if schools are empowered to run it themselves: they are best placed to ensure that needy students get the books free or at a reduced rent.

Computers in general secondary education

From the restoration of its independence, Lithuania has well recognised the importance to its relatively small population of developing competency in using information and communication technologies (ICT). Its early policy decisions in education were sound and, wherever possible, funding followed policy. In common with many countries undergoing transition to market economies, its problems now centre on shortage of funding available for hardware and software, development of software in its own language and teacher training.

The key body responsible for policy formulation and implementation of ICT in schools in Lithuania is the Centre of Informatics and Prognosis. This Centre was set up in 1990, in the first year of Lithuania's restoration of independence. Its responsibilities fall into the following eight areas:

- Establishing educational information infrastructure.
- Setting up and running the national educational network.
- Organising in-service training in the sphere of technology.
- Developing curriculum and textbooks for the compulsory informatics subject.
- Preparing and publishing educational software and other learning materials to promote the cross-curricular use of ICT.
- Supervising and evaluating the implementation of ICT.
- Supporting activities of students gifted in programming.
- Employing computers in teaching disabled children.

The team was impressed by the calibre of the Centre staff and the amount of work being done by a small but very able group. Their policy and developmental work is soundly based; their responsibilities sensibly articulated. Adequate funding for realisation of their good planning, however, presents a problem.

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Until 1994, hardware and some software for schools were funded directly from the state budget. From 1996 this method was replaced by grant-based funding. The first project to operate under this scheme was Computers for Secondary, Vocational and High Schools (Colleges) in Lithuania. The chief "driver" at that time appeared to be the need to satisfy EU membership preconditions. From a budget of LTL 28 million (€ 7 770 983), more than 70 secondary schools were equipped with computer laboratories and the remainder were provided with at least one computer with a modem. The project also aimed to establish an infrastructure for ICT related teacher training based on regional computer centres. More than ten regional ICT teacher training centres were set up with additional Open Society funding. Unfortunately, since the project's conclusion, lack of ongoing funding has meant the gains made from this worthwhile project have now been mostly lost. In 1998, the Lithuanian Educational Information System project was implemented. This was pitched at building an infrastructure to serve both management and learning purposes. A pilot was implemented in Siauliai County in 1998 with extensions planned to other counties for 1999. The plans for the period 1999-2003 involve the development of distance learning materials and integration of school libraries into the Lithuanian network of libraries. There is mention of measures to assist "socially neglected children". Strains on the education budget could well put this and future ICT projects at risk.

Hardware

In 1998, 93% of secondary schools in Lithuania had at least some computers, the average number available for learning in all secondary schools being 8.8 per school. (See Table 25 for a comparison of the years 1996 and 1998). The figures show that while the number of computer-using schools is commendably increasing, the average number of computers in computer-using schools is not.

The ratio of the number of students to computer has been falling but is still very high. At 70 to one in 1998 and around 50 to 1 for 1999, these figures reveal a

Table 25 **Hardware accessibility in secondary schools, 1996 and 1998**

	1996	1998
Percentage of secondary schools with computers	70.0	93.0
Average number of computers available for learning in all secondary schools	6.5	8.8
Average number of computers available for learning in computer-using secondary schools	9.4	9.5
Ratio of student to computer (%)	99.0	70.0

Source: Markauskaite Lina, "Cross-National Policies and Practices on ICT for Education in Lithuania" in Plomp, Tj., Anderson, R.E., Law, N., Quale, A. (eds), National Policies Regarding ICT in Education (in preparation).

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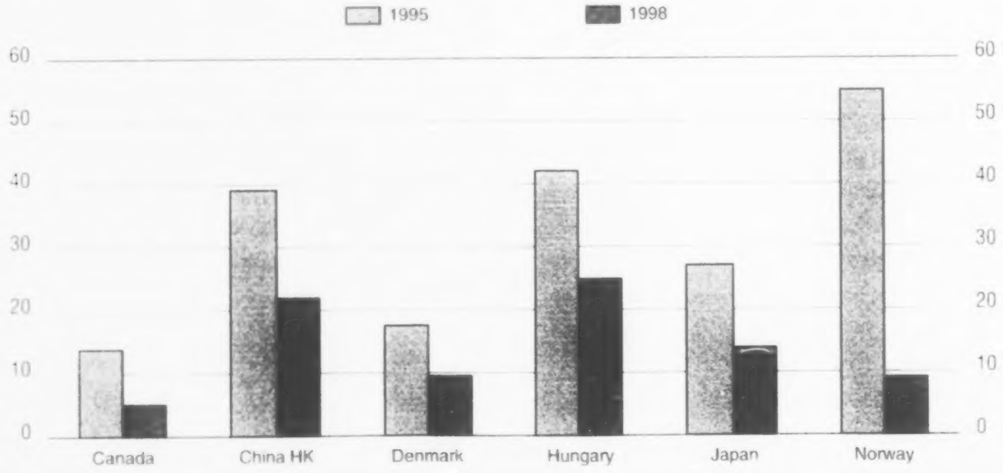
seriously low base at a time when many countries have an average of one computer for every ten students.[24] For comparative purposes, in the UK, a 1998 study indicated a ratio of 9.26 to 1.[25] Singapore comes in with 5:1 but with a master plan target of 2:1 for 2002.[26] Other comparisons are shown in the Figure 14 below.[27]

In ICT implementation, student to computer ratios do not tell the whole story. Quality of hardware is as important as quantity. Quality will dictate the extent to which students can access current and more sophisticated educational software packages or explore the considerable resources of the Internet. In 1998, 72% of computers in Lithuanian schools were Pentiums or 486/386DX/SX. However, only around 15% were suitable for multimedia applications.[28] Although most schools with computers have access to the Internet, in the large majority of schools that access is from a single computer. Data gathered for the IEA survey suggests that less than 50% of upper secondary students have a chance to use Internet resources.

While the level of equipment available in secondary schools and gymnasia is far from adequate, the situation in primary and basic schools in Lithuania is worse. It has been estimated that at the beginning of the 1998/99 school year only 15% of basic schools owned one or more computers and practically no computers exist in primary schools.[29]

The review team recognises that, despite the government's best efforts, it will be very difficult in the short term to provide the considerable financial resources needed to sustain the expansion of school computerisation from this relatively low base, especially given the level of budget cuts anticipated.

Figure 14. **Number of students per computer, 1995-98**



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Software

Most software applications and operating systems used in schools in Lithuania are in English. In 1996 IBM provided a free state-wide licence on its operating system, Works and Lotus Notes. Despite this software being translated into Lithuanian, it met with resistance in schools, which tended to opt for Microsoft operating systems and software. Probably because of the size of the market, there appears to be little commercial interest now in developing educational software in Lithuanian. Some home-grown software development is taking place, as well as some translation of educational software from abroad. Where this is under the support of the state, such software is distributed freely to all schools. The EC-Phare multi-country project (described in Chapter 7) has contributed to building Lithuanian expertise in software development, but this is used mainly in the higher education sector.

Technical infrastructure

Lithuania now has an infrastructure for an educational network. The Lithuanian academic and research network, LITNET, links the five biggest sites in Lithuania, providing dial-up access points for e-mail and Internet. Schools are able to link into this network. As it currently stands, however, this network is struggling to meet ever-increasing demands, particularly for Internet access. One of the aims of the current Lithuanian Educational Information System project is to set up a state-wide educational network; but little progress is evident to date. Where schools can afford it, they are turning to the use of commercial providers, further widening gaps among schools across the country.

ICT *and curriculum*

During the days of Soviet rule, a start was made on the introduction of computers to general secondary education in Lithuania. Informatics became a compulsory subject in upper secondary grades and a uniform Informatics curriculum was introduced.[30] In the decade before the restoration of independence, equipping schools with computers was regarded as the means of implementing this Informatics curriculum; and to a certain extent it still drives the computerisation of schools. Today Informatics is a 68-hour compulsory subject for grades 9 and 10 regardless of the availability of computers. In fact two versions of the syllabus exist: one for implementation in schools with equipment and one for those either without or with inadequate numbers or quality of computing equipment – a tribute both to the ingenuity of the Lithuanian educators and to the importance placed on computer literacy.

Currently, a new modularised Informatics curriculum for grades 11 and 12 is being developed along with standards for the subject. This course will be compulsory for the humanities and science profile streams. Optional modules will be available for all other profile streams. Informatics can be chosen as an examination subject for

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final school based secondary schools examinations. The examination to date tests theoretical knowledge not practical skills. Informatics, however, has not been listed for future development as part of the state Matura examination suite.

Since independence, MoES has introduced worthwhile changes to the Informatics curriculum, shifting the emphasis from programming to tools for living in an information society. However, Lithuania is somewhat restricted in its capacity to integrate ICT into curricula other than Informatics because of the shortage of hardware available, the present limitations on Internet access and shortage of educational software in the Lithuanian language. As the situation improves, Lithuania will be able to build on the steps already taken to develop active or autonomous learning strategies in students. This will require both increased teacher awareness of the potential of across-the-curriculum use of ICT and curriculum modification.

Financing of school computerisation

The Government of Lithuania is spending large amounts – relative to the size of its education budget – on school computerisation. Apart from the funds on the projects outlined above, LTL 2 million (€ 555 070) were spent in 1998 and LTL 4 million in 1999.[31] The *Seimas* Education Committee, as did the Lithuanian President, indicated to the review team strong support of the drive for information technology literacy and acknowledged the need for greater investment in school technology. Computerisation of schools is listed as one of the educational areas facing the largest shortages in financing by the Economic Research Centre in its report Effectiveness and Efficiency of Public Expenditures in the Education Sector. This report points to lack of "purposeful education policy" in the area and to the unevenness of provision in schools.

The team, nevertheless, did visit schools that were well equipped. In most cases, the equipment had been purchased by the schools themselves from extra budgetary funds; in other cases it had been donated by external sources (Soros Foundation, gifts from Denmark and other Scandinavian countries in particular). Several refurbished comprehensive schools visited in remote areas were particularly well equipped having been funded by their municipalities' share of privatisation funds.

Issues related to computers in schools

Long-term planning

Despite the planning evident in the work of the Centre for Informatics and Prognosis and the concern and support of government, there seems little evidence of any master plan to address the long-term planning needs in ICT for schools. At the municipality level, considerable effort and finances are being expended to equip schools, in many cases from other extra-budgetary funding

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sources or from donors. However, this effort is largely unguided by national policy directions and in some cases has resulted in poor purchasing decisions, incompatibility of equipment and wasted resources. The computerisation of schools is generally ahead of the teacher training needed to make it successful. Although the large projects embarked upon to date have been wisely chosen and have great merit, funding sustainability of gains made has not resulted in most cases.

The rural/urban divide

Students from country schools undoubtedly are relatively disadvantaged in access to computers and experienced Informatics teachers compared with their urban counterparts. Particularly disadvantaged are those students attending basic schools (Grades 1-10) in remote country areas[32] where approximately only 15% of schools have one or more computers.[33] The shift to making Informatics a compulsory subject in grades 9 and 10 has made these inequities more significant. Students studying Informatics without computers are clearly disadvantaged not only at school, but also in the workforce or in further studies.

Teachers' status and training

In approximately 80% of upper secondary schools, co-ordination of computing equipment and activities is done by the Informatics teacher. In most schools there appears to be no recognition of the extra duties involved which in turn results in very uneven application across schools. Nor does there appear to be training available to equip teachers for these ICT co-ordination duties.

When Informatics was made a compulsory subject in grades 9 and 10, schools faced an enormous shortage of teachers able to teach the subject. In-service training courses were quickly established. However, the resulting courses (66 hours) are widely considered to be inadequate to equip teachers to competently teach Informatics – let alone co-ordinate ICT implementation. Training on across-the-curriculum applications and on integration of ICT tools into subject areas has been necessarily neglected given this context.

Lithuania does provide in-service opportunities to teachers to become computer literate and learn the basics of word processing, Internet navigation and use of some educational software. There is little attention, however, to training in the methodologies connected with integrating ICT into the curriculum. It is essential for Lithuania to adopt a longer-term approach to teacher training in ICT, which needs to be recurrent and frequent. In a field where a "generation" lasts less than 2 years, teachers will need ongoing training to cope with the task of integrating new technology into their teaching practices. Budgets for computerisation of schools must reflect this commitment to teacher training for without it resources spent on equipment will be wasted.

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Recommendations related to computers in schools

- A long-term national master plan with policy documentation is needed to ensure maximum value from any funds (from all sources including international donors) expended on computerisation of schools. This plan should be driven by the country's educational needs and its own reform agenda rather than EU accession requirements.
- When equipment levels are adequate, consideration should be given to a shift from an Informatics driven approach to one that emphasises integration of ICT into subject areas. This would involve specific references in national curricula to the use of ICT particularly in upper secondary subjects and expanded teacher training.
- Pedagogical universities should place more emphasis on the methodological aspects of ICT use across the curriculum in their training of all teachers at all levels. In the short term, more generous time allowance for teachers' ICT in-service training is needed, especially for teachers in rural schools.

Teaching quality and methods

"Teachers and students have been greatly affected by the reforms: students start planning their future much earlier than before and have a much wider range of choices. It is true that there is more uncertainty in society, but this has been good for schools." This was the view expressed by members of the *Seimas* Education Committee during a meeting with the review team. Teachers, too, have changed: "They have become much more active professionally; they now understand the issue of resources and salaries in the context of the system as a whole and not simply in terms of their own incomes". Teachers do, however, face a number of reform-related problems. Some long-serving teachers find it difficult to adapt, while young teachers entering the system feel frustrated by the pace and piecemeal nature of school-level change.

Nevertheless, most school-level educators are in favour of the reform: a survey conducted in 1996 found that 89% of respondents agreed with the present direction of educational reform; 77.6% considered the present system to be better or much better than the Soviet one; and almost all (96.8%) considered they were contributing personally to the reform. They did complain that most of the reforms were more "top-down" than "bottom-up" (62.5%), but on balance they felt that the present situation in Lithuanian education was at least satisfactory (68.3%) and that their personal situation during the reforms had either improved (51.7%) or remained unchanged (32%).[34] A survey conducted by the Centre for Economic Research for UNDP, covering parents and the community as well as teachers and pupils, found that most see "school" in a positive light: on a scale of 1-10, the over-

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all rating was 6-8 on aspects of quality, with the highest approval rating given to basic schools and gymnasia and the lowest to vocational education.

Classroom practice

At first glance, classroom conditions in Lithuania appear to be favourable for the implementation of reform. Pupil:teacher ratios are low by international standards (17:1 in primary schools, 10:1 in general secondary grades 5-12) and are likely to fall further due to the declining birth rate, although the planned optimisation of schools may provide a countervailing trend. Teachers' salaries have recently been raised so that they are now slightly above the national average. The full-time teacher workload of 18 hours per week is usually increased to about 22-25 hours (for extra pay) and there are small allowances for additional levels of certification and for teaching in rural areas. Most of the classrooms visited by the team were spacious and while some teachers complained about up-to-date material resources such as books, maps and wall-charts, provision seemed adequate, with the exception of the availability of computers which remains low (see section in this chapter on computers in schools).

Yet the impact of change on classroom practice is still limited, despite a great deal of in-service training provided not only by state-funded central, regional and local teacher training centres but also by a number of non-governmental agencies (NGOs). Teachers still seem ill-prepared for major reforms such as the new curricula and standards, school-based curriculum development, the mainstreaming of special-needs children, the introduction of profiling in upper secondary, the new system of assessment and examinations and new approaches to integrated (cross-curricular) teaching, independent learning and the development of higher-order thinking skills in their pupils.

As for teaching quality and methods, classroom observations by the team showed that most teachers still use the traditional, teacher-led, whole-class methods they are accustomed to. While this may create an old-fashioned impression to a Western eye, the results are good. In fact, there is a clear irony in the "back-to-basics" return to such traditional teaching strategies in the West, just when "progressive" approaches are spreading Eastwards through first- and second-phase education reforms, often driven by external donors. Teachers starved for years of contact with Western trends quite naturally are curious about "child-centred" innovations, in particular when they offer room for teachers' long-suppressed creativeness and professionalism without making too many demands on the school's material resources. Grouping children around tables rather than in serried rows, allowing them to work together, integrating learning across traditional subject lines: all these tend to give teachers and children a sense of renewal and excitement.

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Table 26. **Expenditures on teacher in-service training, 1996/1999**

	Total (actual)	MoES expenditure (Lt)	As share of MoES education budget (%)	Municipal expenditure	As share of municipal education budget (average) (%)
1996		1 264 000	0.4		
1997	4 819 420	1 700 000	0.6	3 119 420	0.1-0.4
1998	6 141 000	2 571 000	0.8	3 570 000	0.1-0.4
1999	5 770 140	2 428 000	0.7	3 342 140	0.1-0.4

Source: MoES and various other sources consulted by the team.

Nevertheless, Lithuanian teachers might well think twice before abandoning many home-grown traditions that have, on the whole, served students well.

Good learning does, after all, require good teaching and whole-class teaching – still by far the most commonly used method in Lithuania – allows the use of some strategies that fit well with what we know about how children learn. The organisational strategy (that of working on a single task with all pupils at the same time) is, in itself, less important, but it allows two others that are critical to teaching and learning: first, active discourse between teacher and pupils and second, the conveying of values about the nature and worth of different ways of thinking, knowing and understanding. As long as these two learning properties are protected, innovative methods can achieve good results, but only when they are in well trained hands and used judiciously.

Before transplanting teaching strategies under the banner of reform, we need to be clear about the relationship between pedagogy and culture.[35] Teachers anywhere use, consciously or not, the strategies best suited to convey certain cultural messages about what learning is about: whether knowledge is absolute or provisional; when ideas should be accepted and when they can be questioned; about the nature of "truth" and authority; about acceptable behaviour or success in learning.

In the best cases, the team found that whole-class teaching is alive, well and successful. In evidence were a diverse mix of teacher-led instruction balanced with group work and exercises to develop the kinds of performance skills still most highly valued in Lithuanian education: a firm grasp of facts, fluent and articulate oral responses, confident blackboard performance and above all, discipline. It can be argued that this does not foster the creativity, independence and problem-solving skills we prize in a Western cultural context, or whether these teachers' values still hold true in a post-communist world. Possibly not: but the hazards of culture-free transplants are obvious.

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Teacher in-service training for reform

The General Concept suggests a minimum of two months during each five-year period for the training of serving teachers. According to a 1995 Ministry Resolution, all teachers are entitled to a maximum of 50 and according to another Resolution (1998) a minimum of 15 paid days of in service training over a five-year period, with official assessment, "at the expense of an educational institution". At the time of the team's visit, the reality appeared to be closer to the minimum of 15 (paid) in-service days every five years. A teacher's choice of in-service institution or course is free, but can be financed from MoES resources only if the course is approved by the MoES and participants receive certificates approved by the ministry. Teacher salaries are dependent on their category of qualification, as determined by the ministry.

At the central level, there is a Centre for Professional Development of Teachers funded by the MoES with 89 staff (46 pedagogical and 43 support staff) and an annual budget of LTL 1.2 million (€ 333 042). Its main task is to acquaint teachers with elements of educational reform. The Centre offers residential courses which can last one or two weeks; it can accommodate 500 teachers per week, selected by local authorities; some of these teachers become "trainers" qualified to carry out cascade-type training in their own schools. The Centre also trains regional trainers to work in the Regional Education Centres (RECs) in each county. The Centre awards certificates to its trainees, but these are recognised (in terms of teacher upgrading) only if a teacher is already "pedagogically qualified". This latter restriction appears to be unduly punitive to unqualified teachers who seek to improve their professional skills.

The Centre's relationships with RECs and local teacher training centres are described as informal but co-operative, for example through the training of trainers. No distance learning modules are offered so far to teachers unable to attend courses, although in 1999 a distance-training module was offered to school heads.

There is considerable activity and even competition among in-service providers at state, regional and local levels and NGOs. Among the most active and influential NGOs has been the Open Society Fund-Lithuania, first through its pioneering "Transformation of Education for Lithuania's Future" programme (TELF, 1993/1998) and more recently through a number of TELF spin-off NGOs including the Foundation for Educational Change, the Centre for School Improvement and the Centre for Modern Didactics. Several leading educators who developed the 1992 General Concept in Lithuania continue to pursue its goals through these NGOs, with an emphasis on democratic values, social justice and educational opportunities for vulnerable children.

Issues in teacher in-service training

The reliance on NGOs in the implementation of school-level reform is only partly financial. Although the national strategy contained in the General Concept sets high goals for schools, there is still not a single state education institution that

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provides support for schools as entities and agents of change, or translates the grass-roots aspirations of communities, parents, teachers into proposals for national educational policy. Social policy in Lithuania is still determined by political groups, often ignoring the interests of those who need to make schools work.

It is helpful to see schools (rather than individual teachers or principals) as the essential locus of change and to approach the issue of teacher in-service training from that angle. Much greater use could be made of teacher-mentors and school-based training: not only is this cheaper, but it is much more effective than an assortment of short academic courses delivered by university professors. Where such academic courses are necessary, they could be consolidated into larger, more coherent blocks or programmes that are of real value to teachers' professional development.

As matters stand, the team formed the impression that a great deal of teacher in-service training offered through local and regional teacher centres is piecemeal, unco-ordinated and supply-driven rather than based on the real needs of schools. Until recently, the "points" system – through which teachers could earn credits towards promotion – reinforced the haphazard way in which much teacher in-service training was organised. In fact, the small (three-member) unit within the MoES that was nationally overseeing teacher in-service training considered its task almost completely as one of keeping track of "points" earned by teachers rather than on needs assessment and the strategic directions and priorities of reform. What is needed now is training for systemic change, rather than workshops on this or that passing fashion in pedagogy.

The team was encouraged to learn that the point system was abandoned in 1997 and that there are plans to establish instead a "Centre for Quality Assessment in In-Service Training" within the MoES whose primary task would be to evaluate the quality of in-service courses and compile a list of MoES-approved training providers. However, to be truly effective in terms of reform policy, a major quality criterion must be the extent to which a particular provider is able to offer training in line with the goals of the General Concept and with such major reform elements as the introduction of standards-based assessment and integration of special-needs children in regular schools.

Setting professional development and training standards is vital not only to the supply of teachers but to the quality of teaching. Standards of good practice in other countries can serve as criteria for evaluating activities and targeting training grants.

Teacher pre-service training for reform

According to Section 7 of the Concept, "teachers must be culturally, morally, civilly, intellectually, pedagogically and scientifically competent" (p. 37). They may specialise as pre-school, elementary (generalist) teachers, subject specialists

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(from grade 5 onwards), or as vocational or special education teachers for all age groups; or as social pedagogues, teachers of ethnic minorities, university teachers, or teachers of adults.

Pre-school teachers may be trained at either university-level HEIs or teacher training colleges (whose provision corresponds to ISCED level 5). In fact, whereas the former train for any level of education, colleges prepare teachers for pre-school, primary or lower secondary work only. College courses may last three years or four (if an additional specialisation is involved), whereas those in higher education institutions entail courses for a Bachelor's degree lasting four or five years (if more than one subject of specialisation is studied), with a further one-and-a-half to two years for a Master's qualification.

Pre-school teachers are trained for all aspects of their future activity but without reference to specialised subjects. College courses for pre-school teachers last just three years. Some pre-school institutions employ specialists to teach music, dance and foreign languages and also make their facilities available for teaching practice.

Lower and upper secondary teachers receive training as subject specialists. Graduates of university-level teacher training institutions are awarded the Diploma of Higher Education (the Bachelor's Diploma) entitling them to teach at all levels of secondary school, as well as in gymnasia. Studies in university-level teacher training institutions may involve a course for a Bachelor's degree of 4 to 5 years' duration (5 years if an additional specialisation is acquired) as well as a study programme for a Master's degree of an additional 1½ to 2 years. Some university-level higher education institutions, Vilnius University among them, offer one-year teacher training programmes to holders of the Bachelor's diploma upon completion of which the Certificate of Teaching Qualification is awarded.

Those who graduate from teacher training colleges are awarded the Diploma of College Education, entitling them to teach their subject(s) in basic school. Courses last four years if they specialise in more than one subject. Otherwise they last for three.

Issues in teacher pre-service education for reform

Interestingly, the Concept also states that teachers can only be trained in "... [institutions] which are granted the right to train teachers by the Ministry of Culture and Education".[36] This would seem to give the MoES strong leverage over the quality of pre-service training of teachers, regardless of the autonomy of university faculties: the ministry could withdraw their right to train teachers if it is dissatisfied with the "products" of such training. Pre-school and primary teachers could also be trained in the newly developing colleges rather than in universities: it is debatable whether the numerous Masters' degree courses offered at university level are good value in terms of teachers' performance in the classroom.

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The team heard that pre-service teacher training has hardly changed, at least in structure and to a large extent also in content: "We have had 10 years of educational reform, but the university programmes have become even more academic and remote from the real-life concerns of school… University graduates find it hard to work in schools; they get on average only six weeks of teaching practice during their entire pre-service course and even lengthening this to two months cannot possibly prepare a teacher for life in the classroom." Perhaps newly graduated teachers could be required to serve a year's internship before they receive their full qualification, as is the norm for doctors and clinical psychologists.

As with in-service training, the team is concerned that much of teacher preparation is remote from the requirements of reform and from the challenges facing the system. The quality and breadth of educational research is also insufficient: for example, apparently not one of the 200 doctoral dissertations currently being prepared in pedagogical faculties is dealing with the crucial issue of school "optimisation", or providing a cost-benefit analysis of school closures in a rural environment. There are now plans to establish a new "Centre for Modern Didactics", with the authority to grant pre-service credits to trainee teachers, to become a legitimate part of pre-service training in Vilnius and Vilnius Pedagogical Universities as well as a university in Kaunas. This new centre is to be co-financed by the Open Society Fund-Lithuania. Its intended emphasis will be on educational management, educational psychology and critical thinking strategies in schools. It is to be hoped that this initiative will attract the attention of other universities and serve as an incentive for them to change their own curricula.

The three-year agreements between the MoES and higher education establishments provides a means for the Government and MoES to link the quality and performance of universities in pre-service education of teachers to the allocation of state budgetary funding. The MoES should consider the results of external evaluations of pre-service programmes as it reviews university agreements in the course of the budgetary process. Linking performance to the allocation of state budgetary resources could be one of the strongest policy tools available to the MoES to prompt needed university reforms.

Recommendations related to teaching for reform

In-service

- Establish the proposed "Centre for Quality Assessment in In-Service Training" at the MoES and compile a national list of approved providers able to offer training in line with the objectives of Lithuania's educational reform agenda.
- Provide incentives for teachers, schools, regions and training providers to adhere to this Centre's standards for in-service training. Are professional

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development programmes evaluated for their impact on student achievement, not just for the enthusiasm they engender in teachers, or whether teachers "like" the training or not? Are there incentives for teachers to take challenging development courses? Are there incentives for teachers to be active in school improvement work?

- Target in-service teacher training on reforms: the new curricula, school-based curriculum development for non-compulsory parts of the curriculum, the introduction of profiling in upper secondary education, new approaches to integrated and cross-curricular teaching, the teaching of higher-level thinking skills, mainstreaming of special-needs children and new types of assessment and examination.
- Encourage schools and training providers to aim for school-based, whole-school training rather than send individual teachers to training courses outside the school. School change and improvement, rather than piecemeal training of individuals, should be the goal.
- Make better use of teacher-mentors and practical work in schools and require newly graduated teachers to serve a one-year (or six-month) internship before receiving full certification.
- Identify and remove barriers to upgrading and qualification of "pedagogically unqualified" teachers, in order to provide incentives for those teachers to work towards certificates that are now restricted to qualified teachers.
- Consider the use of distance learning modules for teacher in-service training. This could be of particular value for the introduction of new curricula or new skills-based approaches, such as information technology.

Pre-service

- Set standards for pre-service training. Some education systems approve teacher training on the basis of explicit criteria; for example that university curricula must cover state standards, educational measurement and teaching practice in schools.
- Use budgetary process (three-year agreements and allocation of State budgetary funds), accreditation and accountability processes to insist that pre-service programmes for trainee teachers must reflect the priorities of the reform. The new three-year agreements required under the Law on Higher Education (see Chapter 7) provide a means for the MoES to insist that external evaluation of teacher pre-service education programmes reflect reform priorities. In the United States, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) has aligned its accreditation processes closely with the principles of standards-based reform.

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- Consider withdrawing the "right" to train teachers if the MoES finds through external objective evaluation that university pre-service training programmes are failing to prepare teachers to perform in a manner consistent with education reform. Pedagogical faculties may need to be reminded that their "right" to train teachers can be withdrawn if the ministry is dissatisfied with the results. Closing a teacher training programme could, of course, run counter to notions of autonomy and academic freedom in universities, but as the principal "consumer" of the products of teacher training programmes, the MoES has a right and a responsibility to demand high quality. At the very least, incentives for universities to improve their training programmes could be considered (*e.g.* in the development of three-year agreements).
- Consider whether pre-school and primary teachers could be more effectively trained at sub-university level (at the newly developing colleges) rather than in universities.
- Significantly increase the amount of time that trainees spend in teaching practice in schools and improve the balance between academic and practical pre-service work. Six to eight weeks are not enough to prepare young teachers for life in the classroom. A one-year internship could be considered.
- Encourage pedagogical faculties to engage in research relevant to the major issues that face Lithuanian education today – such as educational finance, "optimisation", school management and school improvement.

The attained curriculum: what students learn

Perhaps the most accurate picture of educational quality emerges when we look inside the classroom to ask whether any learning is taking place. This, after all, is where in many countries an irrelevant curriculum, a demoralised teaching force, language difficulties, social imbalances and a rigid exams system can combine to do their worst damage and make school an unhappy experience for students. Fortunately, the Lithuanian classrooms visited by the team were lively places where purposeful learning was taking place and where reforms were starting to show results.

How can we find out?

In the absence of direct administrative control, evaluation and quality assurance inevitably become strategic issues in decentralised systems. For many years, the strong features of Lithuanian education – specifically the near-universal participation rates in basic education and the tight, immediate relationship between teaching and learning through teacher-led instruction and school-based (often oral) assessment – provided a good foundation for educational quality, even without an external system of "quality control".

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They could not, however, provide the reliable information that education authorities now need to gauge the quality of student learning across schools and over time; nor could they provide a valid basis for selection, for example by universities or other selective types of education beyond secondary school. Each of these functions – certification of achievement for all students and selection of students for continued study – requires a different approach: related to set criteria (criterion-referenced, exemplified by B-type exams in Lithuania) for the first and related to rankings within a given group (norm-referenced, exemplified by A-type exams) for the second.

The present system

Examinations and assessment

It is possible to combine the two functions – certification of achievement for all students and selection of some students for continued study – and some countries do; but it is technically difficult and seldom satisfactory. Lithuania's new examination system addresses each function separately but within the same framework, ensuring consistency in standards while respecting the role of the school in assessing learning, offering choice to students and still providing a basis for selection to universities. Two major documents establish the system and set out the sequence of its introduction, the first approved in May 1997[37] and the second in August 1999.[38] Substantial financial support was obtained through the EC-Phare Higher Education Reform (HERIL, 1997/1999) which helped set up Lithuania's National Examinations Centre (NEC) and secured technical assistance from assessment agencies in Scotland and Slovenia.

Assessment in primary school

In primary school (grades 1-4), continuous assessment is done by generalist classroom teachers. In primary classes, if a marking (grading) system is used, a 10-point system (10 highest; 1-3 unsatisfactory) is common, although a primary school may decide not to use marks. Promotion from grade to grade is decided by the school's teachers' council; class teachers decide on progress in multi-grade primary schools. If a pupil's performance is unsatisfactory (the pupil is "non-certified"), they may ask for additional assignments determined by the teachers' council; however, if performance is borderline or if parents request it, pupils may be moved to the following class. Exceptional pupils with perhaps 9-point or 10-point end-of-term scores in all subjects may be allowed to skip one class after their knowledge of subjects taught in that grade has been tested.

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Pupils with learning difficulties in special schools or in mainstream schools may be denied entry to the next grade only if this is recommended by their parents or a special school commission.

Assessment in basic school

Pupils progress to "basic school" (grades 5-10 from 1999) without a formal examination, although a certificate of primary school completion is issued. The size of the cohort at that stage is approximately 57 000.

From grade 5, students are taught by subject specialist teachers. In all end-of-term and end-of-year assessments in grades 5-10, students' attainment is measured on a 10-point scale even though teachers may use other systems with the approval of the school. Teachers may also choose whether assessment should be based on written or oral tests, ongoing credits or projects and how often they should be assigned. Although, up to the age of 16, pupils whose performance is unsatisfactory (1-3 points) may move on to a higher class with the agreement of their parents, they cannot take basic school leaving examinations until they have improved this performance with a higher score. If, at 16, the results are still unsatisfactory, they are offered education in another type of institution.

Examinations on completion of basic school are approved by the ministry and are compulsory for all pupils with 4-10 points in their end-of-year assessments. They are aimed at certification of basic literacy of each student: functional literacy (reading, writing, counting and communicating) and "social literacy". Exams are administered at the school level, although from 2000 there will be externally-set (but school-marked) examinations in mathematics, Lithuanian language and an extra exam in mother tongue (Belarus, Polish or Russian) in schools where students' language of instruction is other than Lithuanian. There are also plans to add an examination in Lithuanian history and civics from 2001/2. The leaving certificate shows grades based on the 10 point scale and entitles students to enter a vocational school and some colleges, as well as general (upper) secondary school. The size of the cohort at that stage is approximately 52 000.

Assessment in post-compulsory secondary school

Until recently, there were no external secondary school leaving exams. The exam taken by students at the end of grade 12 was set and marked in the school; in addition, only about 50% of school leavers took these exams and they were not well regarded by universities who insisted on setting their own entrance examinations. That system is now changing.

School-leaving (Brandos or Matura) examinations are administered at the end of 12-year secondary school, both at school [B] level and national [A] level. Students must take at least five subject exams at the end of grade 12, at either A or B level.

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Table 27. **Candidates for mathematics Matura, 1999**

Matura candidates by type of school (Mathematics, both A and B-type)	No. of candidates	Percentage of all Matura candidates, 1999
From general secondary schools	24 990	73.5
From higher schools	265	0.8
From professional schools	2 764	8.1
From agricultural schools	2 380	7.0
From Centres for Adult Education	3 185	9.4
External candidates (re-sits from 1998)	426	1.3
Total	34 010	100

Source: Interview with NEC, Vilnius, 27/10/99.

Lithuanian language is compulsory for all; two more compulsory subjects are chosen from an approved list; the remaining two are optional. In 1999, two state Matura exams – history and mathematics – were set and marked centrally by the NEC, with additional subjects planned for the next few years *e.g.* biology, physics and chemistry in 2000, Lithuanian language in 2001 and foreign languages in 2002. The cohort size (1999) was approximately 35 000 for both A and B levels. From 1999, the grade 12 external A exams fulfil both the function of school leaving and university entrance exams in the subjects examined – *i.e.* history and mathematics only at the time of the team's visit. In February, students in vocational and agricultural schools can sit the same exams as those held for the Brandos examinations in the summer. The longer-term goal is to phase out special Matura examinations for these schools and enlarge the list of Brandos subjects related to vocational and agricultural curricula.

The grading scale throughout the system is 1-10 (with 1-3 = fail). Starting in 2000, however, the state Matura exams will be marked on a scale of 1-100. In these state exams, the point score will reflect the percentile ranking of the students who passed.

The General Concept (Section 5.2) states that "enrolment in state Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is not limited" as long as applicants have at least completed secondary education. Where applicants exceed places, "contests" may be held, including entrance examinations. "Every person having a graduation diploma or any certificate showing completion of a secondary school education may enter" and HEIs may set their own entrance requirements as long as they are based on State graduation exams.

Legal and institutional framework

The Education Law [Art. 31(18)] gives the MoES the power to "organise" the final exams in principal subjects of general secondary; form the commissions that

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set exam tasks; and supervise exams and their marking. It is also a pupil's right "to take externally any yearly [course] examination of a secondary or vocational school, or the final school examination" [II (18)(5)]. The 1992 General Concept sets out core subjects and the levels (A and B) to which these can be studied in the upper grades (Sections 3.2). National examinations are free of cost to all candidates.

The National Examinations Centre, established in 1996 and developed with substantial EC-Phare support 1997-99, is charged with the responsibility for Brandos or Matura (grade 12) and basic school (grade 10) examinations. In addition, national assessments (diagnostic tests) are planned for grades 4 and 8 in 2002. Vocational subjects (mechanics, technology, business) can be introduced with at least two years' notice to the schools; such exams would be school-based, not at the state (central) level.[10] The NEC is also the agency that co-ordinates Lithuania's participation in international assessments such as the IEA Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS and TIMSS-Repeat) at grades 7-8 and 12 and similar studies in computer education, civics, etc. Lithuania is not at present participating in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) project.

Sample tests for use by teachers in the classroom are constructed by NEC working groups to guide teacher and school-based assessment and the NEC participates in teacher training to improve classroom assessment practices. There are plans for the gradual introduction of a "school quality" model to monitor the attained curriculum in schools.

No explicit indicators are used by the MoES to assess the attained curriculum. Analyses of the new grade 12 exams are available starting with 1999; diagnostic tests at key stages (4 and 8) are planned after 2002 and may provide additional data. Some indications of performance did emerge from the international IEA studies mentioned above.[10] Lithuania's performance on TIMSS (grade 7/8) was disappointing, in that Lithuanian pupils ranked 35th in both mathematics and science out of a group of 41 participating countries.

The NEC keeps test results by school and can collate them at national, regional and local level to inform education authorities. Since 2000, a student-level database is available, as well as full test and item analysis. Every school receives comparative information about its own and national results and all school results are published on the Internet. All information is openly available to the public and the NEC website receives as many as 3 000 visits a day during peak exam periods. All question papers are posted on the internet immediately after an examination is taken. The NEC has an explicit policy of maximum openness commensurate with the need for confidentiality.

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Standards

A 1997 general curriculum framework (*Lietuvos Bendrojo Lavinimo Mokyklos Bendrosios Programos*) was followed by specific standards (*Bendrojo Issilavinimo Standartai*) for grades 1-10. Standards for grades 11-12 in secondary schools and gymnasia are being revised to prepare for "profiling" which is set to reduce the number of compulsory subjects from 16 to 12 in each "profile" (humanities, science, fine arts, technology). The creation of a national vocational standards structure is underway.

Issues in assessment

Implementing standards-based reform

Clear standards, accountability systems and strong incentives are not enough to change student learning in classrooms. What is needed are strategies to build capacity in the classroom and to strengthen infrastructure at school, regional and national levels to support quality in learning.[11]

In Lithuania, the "architecture" of standards-based reform is now in place: academic content standards, the beginnings of performance standards for students and new-style assessments compatible with new curriculum objectives now exist. However, no explicit national indicators of quality have been agreed – indicators are, to some extent, implicit in the *Standartai* and in the assessments based on them, but they have not been set out clearly enough for teachers to use them in a practical way. At national level, working groups in a wide range of subjects are now converting curriculum standards and objectives into assessment standards and objectives. These should go a long way towards clarifying what is expected of teachers and students.

At the classroom level, the three most important barriers are:

- *Teachers' knowledge and skills*: some are not qualified in the subject they teach, have never studied child development or modern teaching methods, or have never passed tests certifying their knowledge of teaching. Teachers typically get little assessment training and are often more familiar with norm-based tests than with criterion-referenced and standards-based assessment.
- *Student motivation and readiness to learn*: the conditions of many students' lives – poverty, unemployment, family problems etc. – undermine their capacity to learn. Moreover, students may not be motivated to learn standards-based curricula if these are irrelevant to getting a job or a university place.
- *Good curriculum materials for students and teachers*: a lack of standards-linked books and materials and inattention by commercial publishers to standards-based goals is evident. School leaders complain that the state standards

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are too general to guide school-based curriculum development and that staff does not have the resources to translate standards into practice.

These barriers to standards-based reform cannot quickly be overcome. Nevertheless, international practice provides some promising strategies that could be useful to Lithuania. First, locate assistance as close as possible to the schools: decentralise support systems and make use of a variety of resources. Second, produce practical teacher guides to help teachers develop their own classroom assessment tools; good CD-ROM and on-line access to best practice and planning tools based on state standards, could be considered also.

Third, make sure that the performance data generated by assessment are put to positive use. The theory is that accountability systems (*e.g.* "league tables", as in the UK) will drive standards-based reform. But for this to happen, performance data must be transparent, reliable, fair and must lead to appropriate action. In Lithuania, the first three of these criteria are starting to be met through the work of the NEC; however, the fourth – appropriate remedial action – still needs to be addressed. Part of the problem is that even when teachers receive individual student results, they still find it difficult to interpret what these results mean for changing their classroom practice.

Coherence across the system

The NEC has done a remarkable job in improving the reliability, validity and comparability of examinations, especially at the important school/university interface where "high stakes" exams capture the attention of parents and students. However, not all exams serve the same purpose – the grade 10 exams aim to certify that a student has reached an acceptable level of achievement in basic schooling; school-leaving exams of the "A" type are meant for university selection; school-leaving exams of the "B" type offer students an opportunity to show achievement in subjects not needed for university entrance. In addition, there are plans to introduce national sample-based diagnostic tests, to respond to the implications of "profiling" in upper secondary schools and gymnasia, to achieve parity of esteem between academic and vocational achievement and to make school- and classroom-based assessment more professional and consistent.

The challenge now is to build all these facets into an integrated, standards-based quality monitoring system which provides students, teachers, school administrators and policy decision-makers with the kind of information they need. Such a coherent system should not only be capable of monitoring a student's progress throughout his or her educational career; it should also reinforce the links between the intended curriculum, the delivered curriculum and the attained curriculum as set out in Table 19, Dimensions of educational quality.

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The cost of assessment

Traditionally, the assessment/examinations function in Central and Eastern European countries has been virtually cost-free. Questions were set by teachers, or (for main examination points) by ministry officials or university professors, either for no fee or a very low fee. These questions were not scrutinised or checked. They were either duplicated in small numbers for distribution to regional or local authorities, from where they eventually arrived in the schools where teachers wrote them on the blackboard or conducted the exams orally.

High-quality, standardised exams, however – and particularly the kind that contain complex problem-solving or visual-stimulus types of questions – are expensive to construct, moderate, typeset, reproduce, store, distribute, collect, mark, report and analyse. They require a high level of professional, technical and logistical sophistication. They also require secure premises, electronic equipment and transport and distribution. While costs of external testing per pupil vary widely from one country to another,[12] in most instances the per-pupil cost of a high-quality school-leaving examination is little more than the cost of a single science textbook and therefore good value for money. Nevertheless, many ministries find it difficult to accept that they will need to add a substantial separate line to their annual budgets (and a number of staff positions) strictly for assessment and evaluation.

Linked to the issue of cost is that of sustainability. In many CEECs, including Lithuania, new assessment systems are set up with the help of substantial international funding. Much advance planning and institution-building is needed in anticipation of the day such funding ceases, to make sure that the "new" system is viable over the long term. This requires a positive, long-term commitment on the part of ministries and their governments and the building of a strong institutional base to sustain the reform once "the project" ends.[13]

Phasing out university entrance examinations

Because the previous, school-set and marked school leaving examination was not well regarded by universities, separate entrance exams were set by faculties to select entrants. In September 1998, the NEC leadership had a series of face-to-face meetings with the Rectors and Vice-Rectors of the various universities in Lithuania to discuss the new system of external examinations. As a result, five universities agreed to use the results of the new exams for university entrance in 1999. In the event, all universities agreed not to set entrance exams in the two subjects examined at state level (history and mathematics) and the expectation is that in due course the universities will phase out their entrance exams except where *numerus clausus* may necessitate additional methods of selection.

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The willingness of universities to recognise the new examination is a positive effect of the creation of Lithuania's new Matura examination, especially since the universities were not involved in its development. According to the Law on Higher Education, universities have the power to establish entry conditions, in "co-ordination" with the ministry; they are required to take into account the results of the state school-leaving examination and in addition they may set no more than two tests "for identification of special abilities" (Art. 47).

The intention now is to gradually replace university entrance examinations with externally set and marked A-type, norm-referenced examinations in a range of subjects. The team supports this intention. External control of question paper setting, mark scheme construction and marking procedures will improve comparability of grades across the country and also ensure that these examinations accurately reflect the content and spirit of the national curriculum, rather than a particular teacher's interpretation of it. Stringent quality control measures at the NEC will also help ensure that A-type results are sufficiently reliable for university selection purposes.

At the same time, there should be a commitment on the part of universities not to require more than the general school curriculum can provide. The team heard that many students find it necessary to pay for extra tutoring outside school, because some faculties – especially the ones where entry is more competitive – "expect you to know things that are not in the national curriculum". Such expectations have a negative "backwash" influence on teaching and learning in upper secondary, where the pressure on students is already great. Moreover, these expectations are usually focused on content knowledge, rather than the sort of flexible skills the new Matura seeks to promote, thereby negating efforts to slim down and modernise the upper secondary curriculum.

The NEC is currently exploring ways to incorporate marks a student receives on internal (school) assessments into the final examination grading process. This would allow students to receive credit for achievement over a longer period, thereby motivating them to learn and giving them an opportunity to demonstrate skills that may not be measurable by external examinations.

School-leaving and B-type examinations

The proposed grade 10 examinations (end of compulsory schooling) as well as the B-type exams at the end of grade 12 are designed to certify learning achievement; they measure "absolute" performance against agreed standards (rather than "relative" or norm-related performance within a group, as for A-type exams). Such exams are therefore best suited to criterion-related grading[14] where each individual's grade is independent of any other student's.

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For such criterion-related assessment to work, there need to be clear descriptions of what constitutes evidence that a student has met a particular criterion. The team understands that these "grade descriptors" are still under construction for both the grade 10 and the B-type grade 12 exams. There are also discussions about linking B-type and A-type grading systems, in fairness to those students for whom the A-type exam proves to be a "bad choice". To protect those who fail to reach the pass level in an A-type exam – but still produce work of higher quality than the minimum acceptable level for the B-type exam – some linking mechanism should be devised to ensure that students do not leave school empty-handed.

Recommendations related to assessment

- Ensure that assessment information is used to inform curriculum planning. The fortuitous fact that the NEC is housed in the same building as the MoES's Institute of Pedagogy, where curricula are written, should assist in this, in particular with regard to the new grade 10 curriculum and grade 10 examinations.
- Ensure that the MoES's annual budget has a separate line for the assessment and examinations function, in order to ensure the NEC's sustainability and ability to cope with new demands.
- Find additional ways to inform the general public of results, trends and issues in student attainment. The publication of question papers and school-by-school exam results via the Internet is extremely valuable in creating an open, professional and student-friendly image for the NEC. Not everyone, however, has access to the Internet.
- Work with the university faculties to ensure that their entry requirements do not exceed what is covered in the school curriculum and also that they do not require the kind of "memory-based" knowledge the new curricula and tests are trying to get away from.
- Develop the already impressive facilities at NEC to streamline exams procedures and respond to new tasks such as the grade 10 exams and the expansion of the Matura exams to additional subjects. The recently installed optical mark reader (OMR) will help the NEC in the automatic capture of student-level information and in the wider use of objective question types.
- Increase the number of professional staff of the NEC. To accommodate profiling in upper secondary (as well as the A and B-type formats in subjects that are compulsory for some but optional for others), many parallel versions of tests of roughly equal difficulty will need to be created in each examined subject. The professional challenge is huge; and the present staff will find it difficult to cope with new demands.

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The outcomes of learning: what can be evaluated?

System outcomes

Returning to Table 19, the evaluation of quality in a diversified system should take place at three levels: system outcomes, school outcomes and student learning outcomes. Lithuania already has the "building blocks" for a comprehensive quality evaluation structure, but not all elements are interlinked.

On many indicators such as of access, equity and student flows, Lithuania's education system does an impressive job. Nearly all youngsters of compulsory schooling age are in school and many stay in the system well beyond the end of compulsory schooling at age 16. Access to schooling of good quality is nearly universal. The public view is that education in Lithuania is of good quality and is improving steadily compared with the Soviet system of previous times: it offers greater choice, flexibility and prospects for a better quality of life for Lithuania's young generation.

In terms of the fit between what schools provide and what the market economy requires – there is still some way to go. The relevance of school curricula to the country's evolving economy, especially in vocational and professional programmes, still needs a great deal of work, as is obvious from the levels of youth unemployment particularly in parts of the country where traditional manufacturing industries have collapsed. The quality and usefulness of curricula should be the focus of continued attention, *e.g.* through curriculum monitoring by the Institute of Pedagogy and its working groups.

Indicators of system outcomes can be monitored through the gathering of accurate statistics (for example, an Educational Management Information System or EMIS) to measure attendance, dropout and system-level information about student attainment (national and international assessments of performance, such as TIMSS and PISA).

Because of the scope of the education reforms underway in Lithuania and the multi-year process of implementation, it is important that there be a co-ordinated strategy for monitoring system performance over time. Such a system should have the capability to monitor changes not only within Lithuania by important differences (*e.g.* ethnicity and language, region, urban/rural), but also from an international comparative perspective. The Centre for Informatics and Prognosis (designated to collect and analyse statistical information on school education)[45] and the National Examinations Centre have important roles to play in monitoring system performance.

School and classroom outcomes

Raising achievement is the responsibility of the whole school, involving local authorities, principals and staff, students, parents and the wider community. Students

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succeed in many ways and schools are interested in their whole development, not all of which can be measured in terms of academic achievement. Raising achievement is, however, a central aim of every school and an entitlement for every child. The new curriculum and assessment standards should now provide useful benchmarks for monitoring school and classroom outcomes.

Two other monitoring mechanisms are 1) regular school inspections or visits by external evaluators and 2) teacher appraisal or evaluation. Both are in need of attention, but for different reasons.

School inspection

Inspection of schools is now the responsibility of regional education authorities, although there is still a preference among principals for the previous system which made local authorities responsible. There are inspectorates in all counties, with on average 50 inspectors, plus a small department in the ministry responsible for oversight. The role of the inspectorate is defined by the Education Law, which requires state supervision from the ministry but implementation at regional level [Art. 33(8)]. Largely in response to the negative image of "inspection" during the Soviet period, school inspectors in Lithuania have limited powers, even though a clear majority of school leaders (91%) consider inspection of schools a necessity for maintaining quality.[40]

The team is concerned, first, that the nature of external quality control should change from "inspection" to reform-related professional support and advice; and second, that such support and advice should be available as close to the school as possible, in particular with regard to reform implementation where teachers will need a great deal of professional help. This may mean re-assigning the inspection function to local authorities, a solution preferred by a majority of educators interviewed by the team.

Teacher evaluation

The issue of teacher evaluation (appraisal) is a complex one. Soon after Lithuania regained its independence, the qualification categories for teachers were divided into five levels, from junior teacher to expert teacher. To be promoted from one level to the next, teachers were required to earn "points" or credits for in-service work. This system was met with strong resistance from Lithuanian teachers and had to be abandoned; it has not, however, been replaced with a transparent, nationally consistent appraisal procedure based on agreed criteria. The responsibility for teacher appraisal now lies with local education authorities; this is judged satisfactory by a majority of teachers, although some would like to see the school council involved as well. (Interestingly, the head teacher – who by all accounts has the best view of a teacher's performance – is not formally involved in the process.)

The review team would prefer to see a teacher appraisal system that is not directly connected with the issue of promotions and pay increases. The current system does not encourage a struggling teacher to seek help from the same people who decide on these matters. An appraisal system that helps teachers to set their own performance goals against which they can then be fairly evaluated, would be preferable. The current five-level career structure can still function in parallel, with promotions based on length of work experience, level of education, publications and participation in in-service courses as well as classroom performance judged against goals agreed annually with the teacher.

Student learning outcomes

The section in this chapter dealing with student assessment reflects Lithuania's current approach to measuring what students learn. The new national examinations structure, supplemented by the planned national diagnostic assessments and international studies of learner achievement, will give a much clearer picture of learning outcomes than has previously been possible. It will, of course, be essential that such information is widely publicised and used by the MoES for curriculum revision and remedial action where necessary.

The international dimension is increasingly important in the context of Lithuania's accession to the European Union. The alignment of education policies with European "best practice" is of great interest to the ministry and the team found considerable evidence of professional collaboration with other countries to bring this about. The relatively poor showing of Lithuanian students on international studies such as TIMSS has highlighted the need to modernise curricula, focus on performance skills and reduce overloaded and knowledge-based study programmes.

One final consideration is the amount of time students spend at home studying or doing homework. Lithuanian grade 8 science students who participated in the 1994-95 TIMSS study reported that they spent on average 2.7 hours per day studying at home, more than students in the United States and Norway (2.3 hours) and considerably more than those in Denmark (1.4 hours) or the Czech Republic (1.8 hours).[47] Perhaps these 2.7 hours per day could be put to better and more reform-focused use, in order to raise the achievement levels of Lithuanian students.

Recommendation on outcomes of learning

- Develop a comprehensive strategy for monitoring the performance of the education system over time, taking into consideration important differences within Lithuania as well as international comparisons.
- Strengthen the co-ordination of existing resources such as the National Examination Centre and the Centre for Informatics and Prognosis to enhance their capacity to contribute to monitoring system performance.

- Publicise widely the results of national diagnostic assessments and international studies of learner achievement and make use of these results for curricular revision and remedial actions where necessary.
- Focus responsibility for raising achievement on the whole school, involving local authorities, principals and staff, students, parents and the wider community. Use the new curriculum and assessment standards, regular school inspections or visits by external evaluators, teacher appraisal or evaluation for monitoring school and classroom outcomes.
- Continue to pursue the change the nature of external quality control from "inspection" to reform-related professional support and advice.
- Increase the availability of support as close to the school as possible. Consider re-assigning the inspection function to local education authorities.
- Retain responsibility for teacher appraisal with local education authorities, but increase the involvement of the principal/head teacher in the process and develop a transparent, nationally consistent process for teacher evaluation, based on agreed criteria.

C – Financing and Management of Compulsory and General Education

Introduction

Issues regarding the effective and efficient use of resources for education are of major concern to leaders in Lithuania. As described in Chapter 2, national budget expenditures for education (in current LTL, not adjusted for inflation) more than doubled from 1995 to 1999. In the same period the proportion of the national budget devoted to education increased from 21.8% to 30.6%. Increases in funding for pre-schools and comprehensive schools (general and compulsory education) have outpaced increases for most other education sectors. Most significantly, the increases have been financed primarily at the municipal level, with the result that municipal expenditures on education (and salaries and social security expenditures) are having an important impact on the capacity of municipalities to meet other obligations (*e.g.* capital expenditures).

The MoES, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the members of the *Seimas* Commission for Education, Science and Culture are aware that the state is unlikely to be able to sustain the recent increase the financing of education over the coming years. At the same time, education decision-makers are faced with the financing of key reforms (the move to 10-year basic school and profiling) and the funding of basic instructional materials and equipment (*e.g.* new curriculum materials, textbooks and computers). In addition, many school buildings need renovation. In this context the only

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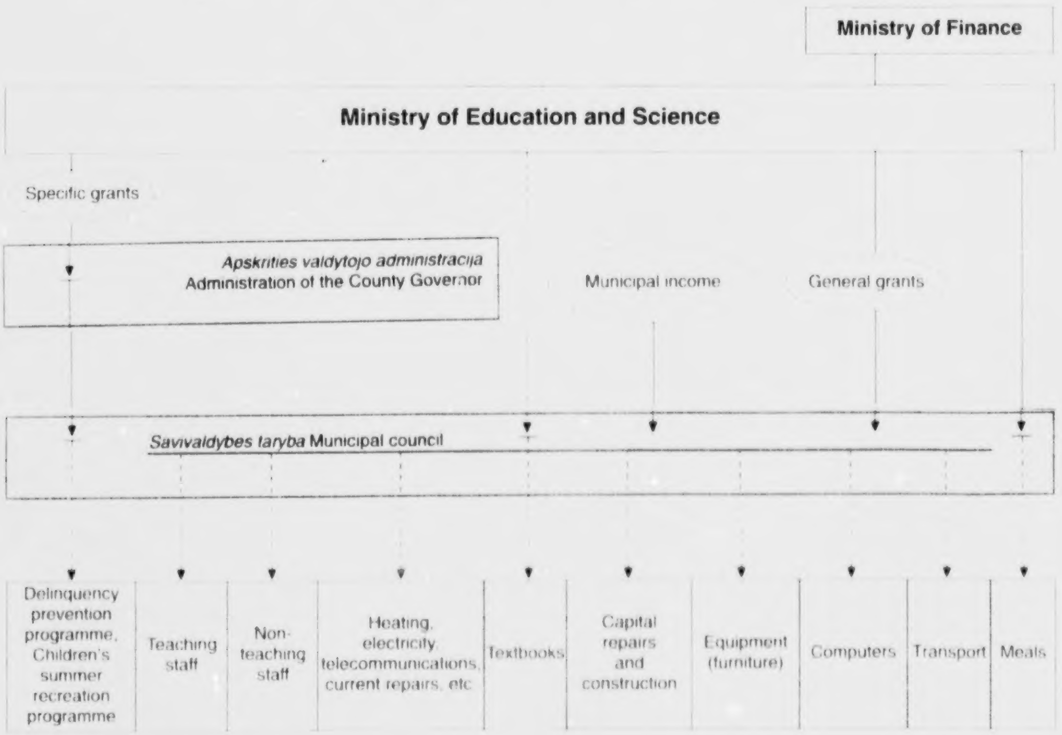
way to finance the implementation of reforms and to improve the conditions in schools is to manage financial resources much more efficiently. To help achieve this goal, the MoES is preparing a programme of rationalisation of the school network often referred to as "optimisation". It is expected that the implementation of the programme will result in a reduction in the number of schools – some small and relatively expensive schools will need to be closed. The first step in this process is to obtain an accurate view of education provision throughout Lithuania's 56 local municipalities; the MoES is planning a school mapping exercise to provide such information.

Levels of responsibility for financing and financial flows

An overview of the division of responsibility among levels of the system and the flow of financing to schools in Lithuania is important for an understanding of the financing issues and policy alternatives. Most of the national budget revenues (state and municipal) for general education are allocated to schools by and through municipalities (*savivaldybes*). The following is an outline of the flow of funds to schools (see Figure 15).[18]

Figure 15. **Financial flows to general education schools**


Ministry of Finance
Ministry of Education and Science
Specific grants
Apskrities valdytojo administracija
Administration of the County Governor
Municipal income
General grants
Savivaldybes taryba Municipal council
Delinquency prevention programme, Children's summer recreation programme
Teaching staff
Non-teaching staff
Heating, electricity, telecommunications, current repairs, etc
Textbooks
Capital repairs and construction
Equipment (furniture)
Computers
Transport
Meals

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The municipality and the municipal council (*savivaldybes taryba*) approve an overall municipal budget, including the municipal budget expenditures for education. The sources of revenue for the municipal budget for education include:

- Municipal income (primarily from personal income tax as well as property tax, the rates for which are established by the central government).
- The central government through the Ministry of Finance and approved by the *Seimas*, including:
  - General grants to municipalities, taking into consideration the characteristics and conditions within the municipality. The central government allocates funding to municipalities to compensate for the differences in the capacity to meet various obligations. Efforts have been made in recent years to increase the rational basis for these adjustments. A new allocation formula was adopted in 1998 using indicators such as population, number of pensioners, number of pupils living in the municipality and the number of square metres of infrastructure. As indicated below, the Government's priority is to move toward a policy of "money follows the student".
  - Specific grants to municipalities for major investments such as school construction.
- The Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), including:
  - Funding for textbooks on the basis of the number of students, allocating roughly LTL 20 per student from which schools purchase textbooks from approved lists (see Part B of this chapter for more detail on financing textbooks).
  - Funds earmarked for meals.
- Counties (*apskritys*) allocate funds to municipalities from funds allocated to the counties by the MoES including funds for implementation of specific national scale programmes. Municipalities receive specific cash allocations from the administrations of the county governors (*apskriciu valdytoju administracijos*) to cover expenses for the implementation of national initiatives such as the delinquency prevention programme and the children's summer recreation programme (*e.g.* the MoES received funds for the implementation of a drug prevention programme beginning in 2001. While a decision has not been made it is envisaged that within the drug prevention programme, financial flow will proceed to the education administration departments of local government (municipal) councils, and then will be allocated in kind to schools). Municipalities allocate funds to schools from the budget expenditure approved by the municipal council within certain categories and constraints.[49]
- Direct remuneration of teaching and non-teaching staff. The rates and conditions for these payments, however, are established by the central Government.

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- Allocations in kind for operational goods and services (*e.g.* heating, electricity, telecommunications and current repairs) as well as some of the capital resources.
- Allocations in kind for transportation services.
- Capital resources: Allocations in kind for construction, capital repairs and furniture.
- Allocations from the MoES for textbooks and meals. Schools also receive an allocation for computers from the MoES (see discussion of computers and ICT in Part B of this chapter).
- Earmarked allocations for national-scale programmes (*e.g.* delinquency) from counties.

Pre-school finance

An August 1995 government Resolution set the terms now regulating payment for children who attend state pre-school institutions. Parents normally have to make a 60% contribution to the cost of their children's sustenance (though there are exemptions or reductions, *e.g.* for single-parent families, families with three or more children, or families where the father is in military service). The state will also provide support in the form of compensatory payments when children of pre-school age are brought up at home. Additional support for children in pre-school institutions may be funded from municipal budgets, as well as from the resources of institutions themselves, enterprises or other organisations. These resources are distributed to the schools. As in the case of general and compulsory education schools, salary levels are established by the central government.

Non-public funds

Because of limitations in public funds (see discussion in Part B regarding textbooks and computers), municipalities and schools are authorised by the Law on Education and the Law on Public Institutions to seek non-public funds from parents and other sources. Municipalities have the authority to decide which sources of non-public finance may be sought and for which categories of expenditures they can be used. Therefore, the situation of non-public funds of schools varies from one municipality to another. A survey of municipalities by the MoES illustrates the general pattern of ways that schools obtain additional non-state revenue (see Table 28). Schools use not only their assets and activities within the school but also contributions from outside the school (donations, sponsorships, advertising and loans) to finance many of the school's core education services.

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Table 28. **Sources of non-public resources in full-time compulsory education schools**

Uses of resources	Sources dependent on direct assets and activities within the school						Sources beyond the school			
	Renting of property	Service provision	Events Fund-raising	Sale of assets	Financial reserves investments	Others (*e.g.* projects)	Donations	Sponsor-ship	Adverti- sing	Credit (loans)
Teaching staff		+				+		+		
Non-teaching staff	+	+	+							
Operational goods and services (teaching materials)	+	+	+	+		+	+ *e.g.* books	+	+	
Operational goods and services (non-teaching materials)	+	+	+	+		+	+	+		
Capital goods (movable)	+	+	+			+ *e.g.* computers	+ *e.g.* computers	+ *e.g.* computers, photocopying and fax machines, TV sets, film cameras		
Capital goods (immovable)										+

Source: Ministry of Education and Science, survey prepared for submission to Eurydice, 2000.

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State financing and non-public schools

As described in Chapter 2, while non-state educational institutions are legally authorised, they have developed slowly in Lithuania. In 1998/99, less than 1% (23) of all comprehensive schools enrolled only 0.3% (1 734) of all students.[50] Provided these institutions receive the necessary approval of the MoES, receive (state or municipal) budgetary funds in the same way as public institutions do under central and municipal government and, on a similar scale, in line with the estimated per-pupil expenditure in the public sector. Parents and students also pay tuition fees subject to agreements between the school and the parents.

Issues related to finance and management

Balance between state-mandated expenditures and capital expenditures

Information shared with the OECD team in the course of the review underscores the importance of the Government's concerns about the efficiency and effectiveness of the school network. Clearly, additional funding is important for many schools. However, the main problems appear to be in the distribution and efficient use of existing resources as well as in the incentives – and disincentives – imbedded in existing financing policy.

A study completed in May 1999 by the Economic Research Centre points to two problems that were also emphasised in the course of the OECD review. First, mandated budget expenditures for salaries and wages and social security payments, the largest components of municipal expenditures for education, have been increasing faster than increases in revenues. As a result, the proportion of budgetary expenditures in other areas, especially for equipment, instructional materials and capital expenditures for renovation of the school infrastructure, have been decreasing. In 1994, capital expenditures made up 6.5% of the total expenditures on education, but by 1998 that percentage had dropped to 4.7%. Data for 1999 (Table 29) indicate that the percentage devoted to capital expenditures dropped even further to 2.8%. From 1994 to 1998, expenditures on salaries increased from 46.9% to 55.4% of national budget expenditures on education.

Capital expenditures as percentage of municipal budgets decreased even more sharply: from 6.9% in 1995 to 0.7% in 1999 (Table 30). From 1995 to 1999, the percentage of municipal education budget expenditures for wages, salaries and social security increased from 67.4 to 86.4% (Table 30).

The Economic Research Centre explains the impact of mandated expenditures as follows:

> …[S]alaries are paid fully despite the shortage of budget revenues. The same is to be said about expenditures on utility services. The plan of capital

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Table 29. **Expenditures for education (national budget)**

	1996	1997	1998	1999
	Actual spending			
Education – total	1 712 880.0	2 206 076.0	2 749 894.0	2 787 578
Pre-school	246 549.6	321 802.9	398 834.6	402 543
Basic/secondary school	755 584.6	955 171.4	1 244 602.0	1 325 573
Capital expenditures	84 637.8	98 592.5	146 328.9	77 691
Pre-school + basic/secondary as a share of total education expenditure (%)	58.5	57.9	59.8	62.0
Capital exp. share in total education expenditures (%)	4.9	4.5	5.3	2.8

Source: Statistics Lithuania and Ministry of Finance.

expenditures is usually unfilled. The reasons is that shortage of budget revenue first of all affects the allocation of capital expenditures by cutting them.[51]

It is not surprising, then, that the Economic Research Centre found that the area of greatest "weak points" in the Lithuanian education system was "the lack of finance for improvement of school facilities and teaching appliances". A survey conducted by the Centre found that Lithuania's population considered this problem as more important than "the lack of teaching staff, qualifications of teachers, quality of teaching programmes and other aspects".[52] The concerns about financing of computers (ICT) reviewed in the previous part of this chapter are directly related to the findings of the Centre's survey.

Table 30. **Expenditure for education (local budget)**

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
	Actual spending			Approved			
Education – total	333 753.5	608 073.0	895 9617	1 117 107.0	1 404 902.0	1 827 634.0	1 916 886
Pre-school	80 645.6	126 040.7	179 603.0	246 549.6	320 740.0	398 098.9	377 993
Basic/Secondary	216 266.7	413 742.7	610 277.2	739 5995.0	926 644.1	1 226 585.0	1 215 293
Current exp.	316 474.1	570 190.7	834 08 6.0	1 069 811.0	1 359 302.0	1 744 617.0	1 778 968
Wages, salaries	148 125.2	310 621.4	467 760.6	608 859.5	812 502.2	1 095 782.0	1 210 745
Social security	43 101.5	92 520.7	136 314.4	177 118.6	259 477.4	331 482.4	336 405
Salaries + social security share in local ed. Budget	57.3	66.3	67.4	70.4	76.3	78.1	86.4
Subsidies to private schools	0	0	0	1 017	1 641.6	2 167.6	1 564
Capital expenditures	17 279.4	37 882.3	61 875.7	47 296.5	45 600.2	83 017	12 718
Capital exp. in local ed. budget (%)	5.2	6.2	6.9	4.2	3.2	4.5	0.7

Source: Statistics Lithuania and Ministry of Finance.

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Disparities between urban and rural areas

The second issue relates to the disparities between urban and rural areas. Lithuania faces a major challenge in revitalising regions where agriculture and industries associated with the previous Soviet economy are not able to compete in the new economy. Declining population and high unemployment are major issues that affect the fiscal capacity of municipalities to providing adequate funding for schools.

According to the data of the Lithuanian Labour Exchange (LLE) of April 1, 1999, the highest unemployment was in Lazdijai (17.3%), Salcininkai (16.8%) and Akmene (16.5%) regions. The lowest levels were recorded in the largest cities (5.7% in Vilnius and Kaunas and 5.3% in Klaipeda) as well as the Prienai region (4.3%). Of all Lithuanian cities Siauliai has the highest rate of unemployment, which is twice as high as in other cities. This is attributed mainly to the fact that the largest enterprises and plants in Siauliai are in serious financial condition.[53] Addressing these issues are clearly major priorities for the Government.[54]

As emphasised by the Economic Research Centre,

> "the supply of teaching facilities and appliances on pre-school and comprehensive school levels differs among regions ... [because the] municipalities that are mainly responsible for financing these institutions have different financial resources. This depends on different economic situations of the regions, different volumes of tax revenue and differences in demographic situation. Regional differences in financing contradict the requirement that all comprehensive schools should guarantee the standard level of education quality."[55]

Low enrolments in rural schools result in significantly lower numbers of students per school in rural as compared to urban schools (see Tables 11 to 17 in Part A of this Chapter). The Economic Research Centre reported that the occupancy rate in rural areas for pre-schools is 30 to 40% and basic and comprehensive schools, 50 to 60%. Furthermore, 13% of comprehensive schools have in average only 5 pupils per class in grades 6-9, 23% of schools, 7 pupils per class and 31%, 10 pupils per class. Because of the small number of students in comparison to teachers and the available school infrastructure, expenditures per pupil were found to be 57% higher than in urban schools.[56]

As discussed in the first part of this chapter, the differences in utilisation of rural and urban schools present strikingly different policy alternatives. For example, whereas in rural areas it is possible to consider placement of pre-schools in underutilised (or even abandoned) primary schools, such an option is not possible in urban areas due to overcrowding.

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Reform of financing policy

These points underscore the importance of priorities established by policy leaders in Lithuania for improving the quality and efficiency of the school network (school mapping and optimisation), renovation of school infrastructure and reforming financing. These themes are reflected in the Government's Programme for 2000-2004, which includes these priorities for General Education:

- To rationalise a general education school network – to make an evaluation of both regional and public needs as well as capacities based on social, cultural and economic grounds.
- To create equal opportunities for rural and urban pupils to acquire proper education in pursuing rational school specialisation, school renovation and school transportation programmes.
- To use education-related funds in an efficient way, to improve education services and to create real conditions to provide education services for citizens according to their capabilities and needs.
- To finance schools according to the "money follows the child" principle and guarantee equal opportunities for private and public institutions.[57]

The Government also establishes a priority for a new national long-term strategy for rural and agricultural development. To address the issues of ICT in the schools, the priorities call for a major emphasis on computer literacy and the development of a programme of ICT in the education system (see earlier discussion of financing computers and ICT in Part B of this chapter).[58]

As indicated above, the formula adopted in 1998 includes variables related to the number of students in a municipality and the number of square metres of infrastructure. The new plan would move toward funding per student on the basis of students attending schools. The language of the Government Programme expresses the intent to follow the principle of "money follows the child". These changes are seen as important incentives for municipalities to increase the efficiency of the school network. The priority of augmenting state funding for capital purposes was also emphasised, although the intent is that the optimisation process will also free up resources for improving quality and renovating the infrastructure and material base.

The OECD team strongly endorses Lithuania's objective to develop a more effective and efficient school network. Nevertheless, the team is concerned that this objective cannot be achieved unless there are more fundamental changes in the financing and management of the system. Changing to a policy of "money follows the student" will not alone be sufficient to provide the incentives and support for necessary changes. The OECD team, therefore, recommends that Lithuania undertake a fundamental review of the incentives and disincentives embedded in the

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financing of general education and make changes necessary to align financing policy with the basic reform goals (*e.g.* moving to 10-year basic school, implementing profiling and preparing students for the information society). The policy changes should reflect the recommendations in Part B of this chapter regarding textbooks and computers (and ICT more generally). Policy changes should seek an appropriate balance between the priority of improving the compensation of teachers and the priorities of maintaining and renewing the infrastructure of the school network and providing essential instructional materials and equipment.

Authority and capacity of local education authorities to effect change

The OECD team has the impression that municipalities and schools may not have sufficient authority and management flexibility to make necessary changes because of the restrictions placed on the allocation and utilisation of "mandated" budget expenditures for salaries, wages and social security. The budgetary expenditures in these areas are determined by (among other variables) policies and definitions established by the central government regarding the timetables linked to the curriculum, the definitions of teacher workloads and nationally-defined pay rates. Even with the important increases in teacher compensation in recent years, teachers find it necessary to teach more hours than the standard load (18 hours) in order to earn a living wage. While school principals now have authority to hire teachers, they appear to still have limited flexibility regarding the largest portion of the budgetary expenditures for the school.

The OECD found variations in the extent to which school principals had management responsibility and flexibility even for the limited budgetary resources that were not restricted. In one district, the school principals received funding in several budget categories (*e.g.* salaries, heating, transportation, etc.) and had authority to manage those resources subject to approval of changes by the municipal authorities. In another school in a large urban area, the school principal appeared to exercise limited authority over managing the budget and most decisions (including the purchase of school supplies) were made centrally by the municipal education department.

Consistent with the Government's priority for decentralisation, the OECD team recommends that municipalities and schools be given increased responsibility and authority, including increased flexibility regarding use of budget resources to improve the quality of education. As emphasised in Part B of this chapter, the focus should be on the whole school as the unit of accountability for improving student achievement. The principal should be held accountable as the school's education leader – in collaboration with teachers and with the support of parents, community leaders and local education authorities.

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Impact of optimisation on school schools and rural areas

As mentioned in the Part B of this chapter, small schools face a special challenge in implementing some of the new reforms, especially profiling. These schools – and the municipalities within which they are located – need the management flexibility and incentives to make efficient use of their resources to ensure that, in the words of the Government Programme, rural and urban pupils have equal opportunities to acquire education.

The MoES is well aware that issues connected with school optimisation are politically sensitive, especially in rural communities where the local school is an important part of the social fabric. There is no doubt that small and remote schools often provide education of remarkable quality. The team visited several schools that may not be financially efficient or numerically viable but that are vibrant places where a great deal of creative teaching and learning takes place, with a sense of connectedness to the local community that is of great value not only to the children but to their families and the social fabric as a whole. The challenge will be to preserve these characteristics, while improving the efficient use of resources and expanding educational opportunities for rural youngsters. The success or failure of "optimisation" depends therefore on the local (municipal) authorities' readiness to take tough decisions and on the sensitivity of policy leaders to the potential for unintended negative impact on communities, teachers and children.

The OECD team does not endorse an approach to optimisation that emphasises only the efficiencies to be achieved without giving full consideration to the educational implications and the potential impact on people and communities. Sustaining and revitalising rural areas of Lithuania is a major priority and schools are often the keys to community life – if not survival.

The OECD team also recognises the highly sensitive issue of the potential impact of optimisation on teachers. Because teachers' salaries (and related expenditures) amount to more than roughly 80% of the current costs for education run by local authorities, an effort to achieve savings by reshaping the school network could been seen as a strategy to reduce the number of teachers. The Government is very sensitive to that issue. It proposes, for example, to use the buildings of closed schools to establish local cultural and social centres, where redundant teachers could find employment.

The OECD team therefore recommends that Lithuania require a thorough educational and social assessment of the impact of optimisation on the affected communities. The team also recommends that Lithuania provide incentives to municipalities (perhaps in the allocation of state funds for capital purposes) for development of alternative uses of facilities.

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Finally, the OECD recommends that Lithuania takes steps (including developing opportunities for employment in spheres of social and cultural service) to develop opportunities where teachers made redundant through optimisation may find employment.

Recommendations on financing and management

Undertake a fundamental review of the incentives and disincentives embedded in the financing of general education and make changes necessary to align financing policy with the basic reform goals (*e.g.* moving to 10-year basic school, implementing profiling and preparing students for the information society). Policy changes should:

- Reflect the recommendations in Part B of this chapter regarding textbooks and computers (and ICT more generally).
- Seek an appropriate balance between the priority of improving the compensation of teachers and the priorities of maintaining and renewing the infrastructure of the school network and providing essential instructional materials and equipment.
- Give priority to increased funding for capital expenditures, especially the renovation of the school infrastructure and the provision of essential instructional materials and equipment (see recommendations on textbooks and computers [ICT] above).
- Recognise the critical link between the revitalisation of rural areas of Lithuania and the quality and vitality of education in those regions. Without economic recovery, municipalities in these regions will not have the resources to improve education; without strong schools, the economic and social renewal of the regions will not be possible.
- Require a thorough educational and social assessment of the impact of optimisation on affected children, families, schools and communities. The team also recommends that Lithuania provide financial incentives to municipalities (perhaps in the allocation of state funds for capital purposes) for development of alternative uses of facilities and strategies to sustain communities affected by optimisation.
- Take steps (including developing opportunities for employment in spheres of social and cultural service) to develop opportunities where teachers made redundant through optimisation may find employment.
- Give local education authorities, and especially school principals, increased responsibility and authority, including increased flexibility regarding use of budget resources to improve student achievement in an efficient and effective manner.

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Summary of recommendations on compulsory and general education

Curriculum

- Emphasise integrated and cross-curricular teaching and learning. The present structure of the curriculum and its assessment, remain strongly subject-bound.
- Assist teachers to make better use of the portion of the curriculum that schools can develop themselves (said to be 10-25% of available hours).
- Clarify the rationale for extending compulsory schooling to 10 years and adjust 10th grade curricula to suit the entire ability range, not only those students who are academically inclined. The impact of the move to compulsory grade 10 on three – and four-year vocational programmes should also be clarified.
- Review the implications of "profiling"; especially *a)* the feasibility of introducing it in small rural schools and *b)* the risk that even in large urban schools students may find they cannot choose subjects "across profiles", because their schools segregate subjects strictly along profile lines.

Textbooks

- Urgently develop a textbook policy for Lithuania, with wide stakeholder participation.
- Reconsider and drastically streamline (or gradually abolish) the 35-step textbook provision procedure.
- Consider whether the MoES's contribution to the cost of textbooks (at present approximately LTL 20 per year per student, *i.e.* 14% of the LTL 150 average actual cost) warrants the MoES heavy involvement in order taking, money collection and general control; at the very least, consider how the 14% could be better targeted on those who need it most.
- Observe practice in other newly independent countries, where the issues of textbook financing and distribution have been resolved in different ways.

Teacher training: in-service

- Establish the proposed "Centre for Quality Assessment in In-Service Training" at the MoES and compile a national list of approved providers able to offer training in line with the objectives of Lithuania's educational reform agenda.
- Provide incentives for teachers, schools, regions and training providers to adhere to this Centre's standards for in-service training.

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- Target in-service teacher training on reforms: the new curricula, school-based curriculum development for non-compulsory parts of the curriculum, the introduction of profiling in upper secondary education, new approaches to integrated and cross-curricular teaching etc. Consider the use of distance learning modules for teacher in-service training.
- Encourage schools and training providers to aim for school-based, whole-school training rather than send individual teachers to training courses outside the school.
- Identify and remove barriers to upgrading and qualification of "pedagogically unqualified" teachers.

Teacher training: pre-service

- Set standards for pre-service training. Some education systems approve teacher training on the basis of explicit criteria; for example that university curricula must cover state standards, educational measurement and teaching practice in schools.
- Use budgetary process (three-year agreements and allocation of State budgetary funds), accreditation and accountability processes to insist that pre-service programmes for trainee teachers must reflect the priorities of the reform. The new three-agreements required under the Law on Higher Education (see Chapter 7) provide a means for the MoES to insist that external evaluation of teacher pre-service education programmes reflect reform priorities. In the US, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) has aligned its accreditation processes closely with the principles of standards-based reform.
- Consider withdrawing the "right" to train teachers if the MoES finds through external objective evaluation that university pre-service training programmes are failing to prepare teachers to perform in a manner consistent with education reform. Pedagogical faculties may need to be reminded that their "right" to train teachers can be withdrawn if the ministry is dissatisfied with the results. Closing a teacher training programme could, of course, run counter to notions of autonomy and academic freedom in universities, but as the principal "consumer" of the products of teacher training programmes, the MoES has a right and a responsibility to demand high quality. At the very least, incentives for universities to improve their training programmes could be considered (*e.g.* in the development of three-year agreements with universities).
- Consider whether pre-school and primary teachers could be more effectively trained at sub-university level (at the newly developing colleges) rather than in universities.

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- Significantly increase the amount of time that trainees spend in teaching practice in schools and improve the balance between academic and practical pre-service work. Six to eight weeks are not enough to prepare young teachers for life in the classroom. A one-year internship could be considered.
- Encourage pedagogical faculties to engage in research relevant to the major issues that face Lithuanian education today – such as educational finance, "optimisation", school management and school improvement.

Learner assessment

- Ensure that assessment information is used for curriculum planning.
- Ensure that the MoES's annual budget has a separate line for the assessment and examinations function, in order to safeguard the National Examination Centre's (NEC) sustainability and ability to cope with new demands.
- Find additional ways to inform the general public of results, trends and issues in student attainment. The publication of question papers and school-by-school exam results via the Internet is extremely valuable in creating an open, professional and student-friendly image for the NEC. Not everyone, however, has access to the Internet.
- Work with the university faculties to ensure that their entry requirements do not exceed what is covered in the school curriculum and also that they do not require the kind of "memory-based" knowledge the new curricula and tests are trying to get away from.
- Develop the already impressive facilities at the NEC to streamline exams procedures and respond to new tasks such as the grade 10 exams and the expansion of the Matura exams to additional subjects.
- Increase the number of professional staff of the NEC, so that it can cope with new demands while maintaining its present high standards.

Outcomes of learning

- Develop a comprehensive strategy for monitoring the performance of the education system over time, taking into consideration important differences within Lithuania as well as international comparisons.
- Strengthen the co-ordination of existing resources such as the National Examination Centre and the Centre for Informatics and Prognosis to enhance their capacity to contribute to monitoring system performance.
- Publicise widely the results of national diagnostic assessments and international studies of learner achievement and make use of these results for curricular revision and remedial actions where necessary.

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- Focus responsibility for raising achievement on the whole school, involving local authorities, principals and staff, students, parents and the wider community. Use the new curriculum and assessment standards, regular school inspections or visits by external evaluators, teacher appraisal or evaluation for monitoring school and classroom outcomes.
- Continue to pursue the change in nature of external quality control from "inspection" to reform-related professional support and advice.
- Increase the availability of support as close to the school as possible. Consider re-assigning the inspection function to local education authorities.
- Retain responsibility for teacher appraisal with local education authorities, but increase the involvement of the principal/head teacher in the process and develop a transparent, nationally consistent process for teacher evaluation, based on agreed criteria.

Financing and management

Undertake a fundamental review of the incentives and disincentives embedded in the financing of general education and make changes necessary to align financing policy with the basic reform goals (*e.g.* moving to 10-year basic school, implementing profiling and preparing students for the information society). Policy changes should:

- Reflect the recommendations in Part B of this chapter regarding textbooks and computers (and ICT more generally).
- Seek an appropriate balance between the priority of improving the compensation of teachers and the priorities of maintaining and renewing the infrastructure of the school network and providing essential instructional materials and equipment.
- Give priority to increased funding for capital expenditures, especially the renovation of the school infrastructure and the provision of essential instructional materials and equipment (see recommendations on textbooks and computers [ICT] above).
- Recognise the critical link between the revitalisation of rural areas of Lithuania and the quality and vitality of education in those regions. Without economic recovery, municipalities in these regions will not have the resources to improve education; without strong schools, the economic and social renewal of the regions will not be possible.
- Require a thorough educational and social assessment of the impact of optimisation on affected children, families, schools and communities. The team also recommends that Lithuania provide financial incentives to municipalities (perhaps in the allocation of state funds for capital purposes)

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for development of alternative uses of facilities and strategies to sustain communities affected by optimisation.

- Take steps (including developing opportunities for employment in spheres of social and cultural service) to develop opportunities where teachers made redundant through optimisation may find employment.
- Give local education authorities, and especially school principals, increased responsibility and authority, including increased flexibility regarding use of budget resources to improve student achievement in an efficient and effective manner.

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Notes

1. This section of the report draws extensively from Eurydice, *Supplement to the Study in the Structures of the Education and Initial Training Systems in the European Union: The Situation in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia and Cyprus*, pp. 67-78.
2. EURYDICE. *The Lithuanian Education System* 1998/99. Vilnius: Ministry of Education and Science. p. 19.
3. Some translated documents use the term "comprehensive" schools. Although this term has no official standing in law or policy, it usually refers to basic schooling grades 1-10. This review avoids the use of "comprehensive" and uses "basic" instead except where the reference is to other than grade 1-10.
4. EURYDICE, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-71.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 71-75.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Data on gymnasia are sometimes included in figures on general secondary schools. When data are separated it is not clearly indicated whether they refer to schools with gymnasium status or gymnasium classes in secondary schools.
8. For example, the IEA studies of international achievement; see also "Conceptualisation of Monitoring Quality in Education: The Relation with Education Standards and Assessment". Tjeerd Plomp and Joke Voogt (1998) in *Education Standards and Assessment in the Russian Federation* Leuven: Acco. pp. 81-88.
9. In fact, Lithuanian national schools were first established in 1397 with the founding of the Vilnius Cathedral School, followed in the 15th century by many elementary schools known as "parish" schools. A more comprehensive national education system oriented towards European culture was established by the Jesuit Order from 1570 onwards; it developed into a national secular system over the next 350 years, only to be dismantled again after Lithuania lost its independence in 1940.
10. Zelvys R. (1999). *Managing Education in a Period of Change*. Blindern, Norway: ELI Publishing. p. 57.
11. Ministry of Culture and Education (1992). *General Concept of Education in Lithuania*. Vilnius. p. 41.
12. Two state-approved curricula exist for pre-school: "The Guidelines for Pre-School Education – A *Curriculum for Teachers and Parents*" which uses an integrated approach (1993), and the 1993 programme *The String (Vėrinėlis)* based on creative methods. There are also Montessori and Waldorf pre-schools.
13. Zelvys R. *op. cit.* p. 51.

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14. Rimkeviciene V. (1998) "Education" in *The Lithuanian Education System*. Vilnius: United Nations Development Programme and Social Policy Unit. pp. 89-100.

15. But not yet in all schools. Only 60% of schools which previously had no grade 10 were able to open a grade 10 class in 1999/2000.

16. EURYDICE. The Lithuanian Education System 1998/99. Vilnius: Ministry of Education and Science. p. 19.

17. A new modularised informatics curriculum is being developed for grades 11 and 12; the intention is that this will be a compulsory subject for the humanities and science profiles, but optional for other profiles. Students can sit a school-based (B-type) final Informatics exam at the end of grade 12, but not yet a state (A-type) Matura examination.

18. Statistics Lithuania (1999). *Svietimas*/Education. Vilnius. p. 71.

19. Four primary schools grades 1-4 with kindergartens, four primary schools grades 1-4 without kindergartens, three basic schools grades 1-9 with kindergartens, one basic school grades 1-10 with a kindergarten, a basic school grades 5-10, eight secondary schools grades 1-12 (four of them with kindergartens, one with a gymnasium classes 9-12), a secondary school grades 5-12, a gymnasium grades 9-12, and a youth school grades 7-10. Information provided by Utena Department of Culture and Education.

20. In 1998, 14 publishers offered a total of 118 titles. The market is, however, dominated by two publishing houses, Sviesa with 69 titles and Alma Littera with 15 titles.

21. At the time of the team's visit in October 1999, the Centre was said to owe 4 million LTL (€ 1 110 140) to various publishers.

22. Kucinskaite Jone (Sept. 1999). "*Valstybiniu uzsakymu troskulу*" ("The Thirst for State Contracts") in *Svietimas*. pp. 24-25.

23. To stimulate the emergence of a private texbook publishing sector in Romania, start-up subsidies of USD 10 000 (€ 11 101.97) were awarded to successful (new) bidders to produce these sample copies. (World Bank/Govt. of Romania Education Reform Project, 1994/1999).

24. Pelgrum and Anderson (eds) (1999). ICT and the Emerging Paradigm for Life Long Learning: a worldwide educational assessment of infrastructure, goals, and practices. Amsterdam: IEA.

25. The Internet in Secondary Schools. Report of a Survey into Internet Provision and Use in Secondary Schools, University of Manchester, Faculty of Education, 1998.

26. Harding Robert, Coimbra Group Lecture, at the University of Leiden, June 1997. Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics (DAMTP), University of Cambridge United Kingdom, *http://www.damtp.cam.ac.uk/icrd/pub/Leiden*97/.

27. Pelgrum and Anderson (eds) (1999). ICT and the Emerging Paradigm for Life Long Learning: a worldwide educational assessment of infrastructure, goals, and practices. Amsterdam: IEA.

28. From data collected for the International Association of the Evaluation of Educational Achievements (IEA) survey, IEA SITES, 1998.

29. *Ibid.*

30. Markauskaite Lina. "Cross-National Policies and Practices on ICT for Education in Lithuania" in Plomp, Tj., Anderson, R.E., Law, N. Quale, A. (eds), National Policies Regarding ICT in Education (in preparation).

31. Figures provided orally by the Vice Chancellor on 22 October 1999.

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32. It should be noted that there are exceptions to this generalisation. The team did visit some rural schools that were well equipped with good access to the Internet.

33. Figures from the Centre for Informatics and Prognosis.

34. Zelvys R. *op. cit.* pp. 65-68.

35. Alexander R. J. (1996). "Other Primary Schools and Ours: Hazards of International Comparison." CREPE Occasional Paper. Warwick: Centre for Research in Elementary and Primary Education, University of Warwick, United Kingdom.

36. The Ministry of Education and Culture was the predecessor of the Ministry of Education and Science.

37. The Main Principles of Examinations of General School Education in Lithuania. Vilnius: MoES Council of Education 30/05/1997.

38. "Landmarks in the Development of School Examinations and Diagnostic Testing in Lithuanian General Education": Vilnius: MoES Council of Education 26/08/99, Approved by order of the Minister 31/08/99. It charges NEC and its Director with responsibility for the 2000 Brandos and basic school examinations, and for diagnostic testing until 2002. Subjects to be centrally examined (and to be counted for university entrance) were announced in 1 November 1999 by the Ministry's Department on Science and Higher Education.

39. *Ibid.*

40. Within the region, nine Central and Eastern European countries participated: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, the Russian Federation, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia; Lithuania's scores were the lowest among this group. See Váry, P. (ed.) (1997), Are We Similar in Maths and Science? A Study of Grade 8 in Nine Central and Eastern European Countries. Budapest: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEANCEE).

41. Massell Diana (25 July 1998). "State Strategies for Building Local Capacity: Addressing the Needs of Standards-Based Reform" in CPRE Policy Briefs, Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania. Consortium for Policy Research in Education, pp 1-15.

42. Whetton C. (May 1999). "Attempting to Find the True Costs of Assessment Systems." Paper presented at the 25th Annual IAEA Conference, Bled, Slovenia.

43. West R. and Crighton J. (1999). "Examination Reform in Central and Eastern Europe: Issues and Trends" in Assessment in Education, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 271-289.

44. Bethell G. and Zabulionis A. (1998). The Nature of Matura Examinations in Lithuania. Vilnius: Phare/HERIL. p. 9.

45. The Centre is responsible for the development and implementation of programmes related to information and communication technologies.

46. Zelvys R. *op. cit.* p. 76.

47. UNESCO Education Report 1998, Table 4.1.

48. MoES, Vilnius, 2000. Information on financial flows was provided by the MoES on the basis of information prepared for Eurydice. In Lithuania, there are also schools with financial autonomy when funds are awarded to school heads, yet their number is rather less than that of schools belonging to the centralised finance and accounts department of the municipality (or the education administration department within the municipality).

49. When visited by the OECD team, for example, the budget from the municipality of Utena to schools was in three categories: 1) wages and social security, 2) heating,

books, equipment, and computers, and 3) renovation. Schools are not authorised to move funds from one category to another – especially from the category for wages that is determined by policies established by the central government.

50. Statistics Lithuania (1999), A360, p. 17.

51. Economic Research Centre, Effectiveness and Efficiency of Public Expenditures in the Education Sector, Summary, Vilnius, May 1999, p. 6.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

53. Lithuanian National Observatory, National Observatory Country Report, Vilnius, 1999, p 6.

54. *Seimas* of the Republic of Lithuania, Resolution on the Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania for 2000-2004, No. IX-20, Vilnius. November 9,2000.

55. Economic Research Centre, p. 6.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

57. *Seimas* of the Republic of Lithuania, Resolution on the Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania for 2000-2004, No. IX-20, 7. Education reform priorities, Vilnius. November 9,2000.

58. *Ibid.*, sections 4 and 9.

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Chapter 4

Vocational Education and Training

Introduction

On the restoration of statehood in 1990, Lithuania, like all states previously under the control of the former USSR, inherited a highly centralised vocational education system designed to cater for the specific needs of a planned economy. It comprised vocational schools and *technikums*. Under this system, vocational education was closely linked to major state-owned enterprises and to Lithuania's agricultural sector in particular. It consisted of a widespread network of relatively small institutions offering very narrow professional (worker) and specialisation training. Its pre-planned intake came from the ranks of the less academically gifted, for some of whom it attempted to provide both professional training and general education. The community held both the system and its graduates in relatively low esteem.

Lithuania made an early start on the task of revamping its vocational education and training sector in order to prepare for changing labour demands of the emerging market economy. Many important gains have been made in providing a wider range of training programmes with broadened focus, in improving teaching materials, in establishing a labour market training authority, in reducing the number of professions and specialisation[1] and in planning for reform to bring Lithuania in line with democratic countries operating on the principles of market economies. Unfortunately, Lithuania's praiseworthy vocational education and training (VET) reform efforts have been continually thwarted by severe lack of financial resources.

Lithuania is now at a stage where it faces a range of further challenges in vocational education and training reform policy, the chief of which is to bring together its systems of vocational and labour market vocational training and the various ministries involved, into a co-operative rather than competitive mode of operation. Moves to modularised curricula are urgently needed to bring flexibility and mobility to the system. A further urgent need is to create the conditions for a change in attitudes of both its people and industry towards fostering the concept

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of lifelong learning in order to deal with its huge need for continuing vocational training and retraining.

As an applicant for European Union membership, Lithuania faces the additional challenge of "harmonising" its vocational education and training system and specific national needs with that of the EU. Priorities are to establish a qualifications framework, to set up vocational and training standards and to convert selected advanced vocational education schools to non-university higher education institutions corresponding to ISCED/97 5.

Vocational education reform does not stand alone in Lithuania but must be seen in the context of general education reorganisation. Restructuring, such as the move to a ten year compulsory system, the implementation of external leaving examinations for core subjects and the establishment of quality control systems all impact on the VET reform agenda.

This chapter describes the vocational education and training system in action as it was seen by the OECD review team in October 1999. It will analyse the direction of reform taken from the restoration of independence to the time of that visit and will attempt to assess and comment upon reform policy planning and directions. Its recommendations aim to assist the Lithuanian Government in both sustaining and furthering the vocational education and training reform process which it has so ably begun.

Policy structure and governance

At the time of the review team's visit to Lithuania, the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoARD) were both operating vocational schools but with MoES having the overall responsibility for policy development and implementation as well as control over the general education and culture elements delivered in all vocational schools. Each ministry had authority to open, reorganise and close those vocational schools subordinate to it; however, MoARD was obliged to do this only in co-operation with MoES. Each vocational education institution needed to have a license issued by MoES and had to be registered in the State Register of Education, Science and Studies Institutions. In July 2000, all schools under MoARD were transferred to MoES which now has sole responsibility for vocational schools.[2]

A third ministry involved in vocational education and training is the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (MoSSL). The legal foundations for its involvement rest in the Law on Vocational Education and Training (1997) and the Law on the Support of the Unemployed (1990). Its key agencies for implementing its policies, as outlined by the establishment of the Lithuanian Labour Market Training System in 1992, are the Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority (LLMTA) and the Labour Exchange (LE). The general aims of the system include the support of the

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unemployed through vocational training, counselling and guidance and labour market research. Although the chief training focus of MoSSL is on unemployed adults, it also mounts, through its network of 14 training centres, programmes for the employed. These programmes are often in direct competition with vocational education institutions.

Providers and programmes in vocational education and training

Vocational schools and colleges

Several types of vocational education and training institutions provide programmes leading to qualifications for the workforce. Vocational schools and colleges comprise the first group. These institutions fundamentally cater for children and young adults although some provide classes for adults via extramural and distance modes. Since 1991 a four stage training system has been in place:

- Stage I: Basic vocational education for 14 year olds who have not completed compulsory education at basic school. The programmes last two or three years and provide a simple vocational qualification and may simultaneously provide basic general education. There are 47 training programmes. This stage corresponds to ISCED/97 2.
- Stage II: Secondary vocational education for 16/17 year olds who have completed basic education. The programmes last three years, at the end of which period the trainee will have acquired the status of a qualified worker. There are 94 such training programmes, corresponding to ISCED/97 3.
- Stage III: Secondary vocational education for 16/17 year olds who have completed basic education. The programmes last four years and provide certification of a qualified worker and secondary general education (Matura Certificate). The student gains a pathway to college and higher education. There are 119 such training programmes. This stage corresponds to ISCED/97 3.
- Stage IV: Post-secondary vocational education for 18/19 year olds who have graduated from general secondary education and who want to obtain the qualification of a qualified worker. The programmes last one or two years. There are 78 training programmes corresponding to ISCED/97 4.

Vocational schools in general offer programmes covering all four stages of vocational education. The number of vocational schools has practically remained unchanged since the beginning of the decade. There were 108 vocational schools in 1990 compared to 103 public and one private in 1999. The majority of schools were operated by MoES in 1999, 63 versus 40 by MoARD. As of the school year 2000/2001 they will all be managed by MoES.

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Table 31. **Number of vocational schools 1990, 1995, 1998, 1999**

Vocational schools	1990	1995	1998	1999
MOES	-	63	66	63
MOARD	-	41	40	40
Private	-	3	1	1
Total	**108**	**107**	**107**	**104**

Source: *National Observatory Country Report*, 1999, Table 2.11. White Paper on Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Lithuania, 1999, Table 1.

From 1991, *technikums* became advanced vocational schools, commonly known as colleges. These are institutions of post-secondary education providing 2-4 year training programmes focused on practical training. There are currently 70 colleges under three ministries [MoES, MoARD and Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)] and 18 of these colleges are private.

Lithuania is currently formalising programmes equivalent to ISCED/1997 5B. Establishing such a level occupies much of the attention of vocational education institution directors, vocational education experts and authorities in Lithuania today. Plans are in place to convert selected vocational colleges (advanced vocational schools) to non-university higher education institutions. Advanced vocational schools and the issues related to their transfer to non-university higher education institutions are discussed in Chapter 7. The following data relates to the four-stage vocational school system only.

Most vocational education institutions operated by MoES are concentrated in or around the major urban areas (Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipeda, Siauliai, Panevezys and Marijampole/Alytus), whereas those operated by MoARD have a stronger presence in rural areas and are spread all over the country.

The dense network of vocational education institutions in Lithuania keeps the average number of students per institution low and the teacher to student ratio high. For agricultural schools, the average size was approximately 365 in 1998.

There are seven vocational training centres providing basic vocational education for the disabled. The total student body of this group in 1998/99 was less than 1 000.[3]

MoARD supports 40 secondary vocational schools and 13 colleges with 14 600 and 9 300 students, respectively. These institutions offer 26 professional curricula. Curriculum content offered at different colleges varies from college to college, by roughly 30%. Agricultural educational establishments possess farmland for practice but also for income. It seems that many of the students attending agricultural schools do so because they cannot afford to travel on a daily basis to attend other types of

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Table 32. **Vocational schools: number of schools, enrolment, teaching staff (public only)**

	Number of schools	Enrolment	Average size	Teaching staff	Student/ teacher ratio
1995/96	106	49 190	464	4 671	10.5
1996/97	105	51 651	492	4 760	10.9
1998/99	104	56 442	543	5 078	11.1
1999/00	103	51 962	504	5 032	10.3

Source: *National Observatory Country Report*, 1999, Tables 2.1, 2.4 and 2.6 and Ministry of Education and Science.

schools. Unsubstantiated reports indicate that 10% of the student population have no parents.

Practical training accounts for 70% of the time allocated to vocational subjects. Though a proportion of students will be offered some practical training in enterprises, most training takes place in school workshops. Given that vocational schools on average spend less than 2%[4] of their budget on equipment, workshops usually have to be content with out of date equipment or suffer shortages. The following table shows the share of subjects taught at vocational schools.

Given that low-achievers in times of Soviet rule were compulsorily assigned to vocational schools, vocational education in general has had to face the problem of low esteem. The change to voluntary enrolment is now gradually having the effect of raising the profile of vocational education with the result that numbers are beginning to increase. Following a lull in total enrolment in 1994/95 of 45 150 students, there has been a steady increase in the number of students every year with 56 442 students in 1998/99 (of these approximately 14 000 attended agricultural vocational schools). This corresponds to an increase of 25% from 1994/95

Table 33. **Types of subjects as taught at vocational schools**

Duration of training	VET subjects (%)	General education subjects (%)	General culture subjects (%)	Auxiliary education (%)
Stage I: 2 years	80.4		15.0	5.0
Stage I: 3 years	62.0	18.4	15.0	5.0
Stage II: 3 years	70.4		22.7	6.9
Stage III: 4 years	46.0	36.6	8.1	9.3
Stage IV: 1 year	80.7		15.0	4.2
Stage IV: 1.5 years	84.2		11.6	4.2
Stage IV: 2 years	85.4		10.4	4.2

Source: *National Observatory Country Report*, 1999, Table 2.12 "Ratio of Subjects Taught at Vocational Schools".

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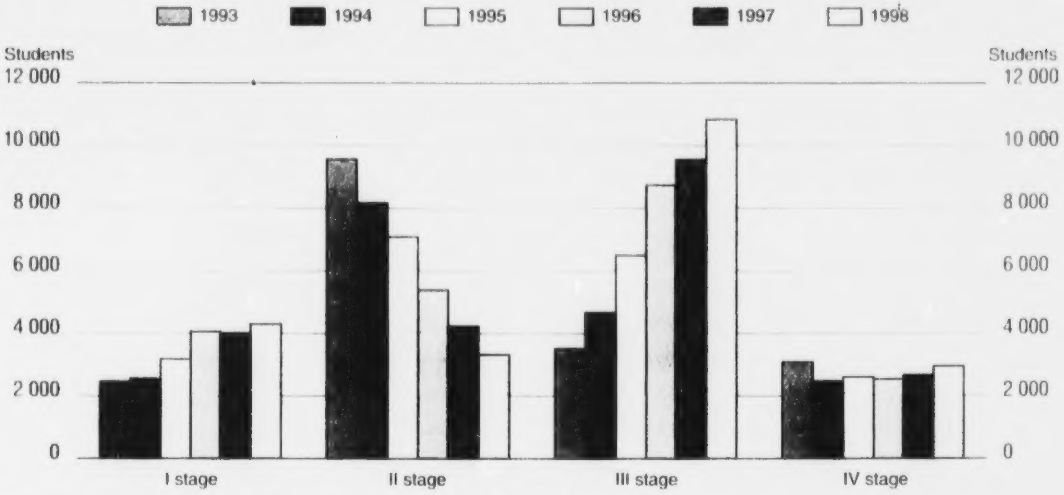
Figure 16. **Intake into vocational education by level, 1993-98**



Source: *National Observatory Country Report*, 1999, Figure 2.6.

to 1998/99. At the same time the total number of students in education increased by 16%. Admission is now restricted and in 1998/99 there were 26 874 applications of which 21 448 students were admitted. Total student cohort in 1999/2000 dropped to 52 000 and intake was only 15 473 but this must be seen in the light of the transition to ten years of compulsory schooling and therefore cannot be compared realistically to previous years.

Figure 16 reveals changing trends in popularity amongst the different levels of vocational education. The most marked differences are in secondary vocational education. Stage III, providing the graduate with the widest range of pathways (a qualification and access to college and higher education) has tripled its intake whereas stage two has seen its intake reduced to one third.

Employment of vocational school graduates

The total number of graduates from vocational schools in 1998 was 13 726. The proportion of graduates from the MoARD's agricultural schools who registered as unemployed was higher than the rate from vocational education institutions run by MoES. The numbers registering were 879 (20%) and 1 308 (14%), respectively.[5] The high rate of unemployment among young graduates of agricultural schools can be partially explained by the fact that they register with the Labour Exchange as unemployed – in order to receive the benefit – although they may be informally working on their small family farms.

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When comparing the composition of the employed population according to educational level to that of the unemployed, it becomes evident that vocational education graduates make up a higher proportion of the unemployed than of the employed. In 1998, whilst 21.9% of the employed population had basic or secondary vocational education, 30.2% of the unemployed had basic or secondary vocational education.[6] (There is some uncertainty about these figures since not all new graduates see an incentive to register as unemployed.)

Language of instruction

The dominating language of instruction is Lithuanian. The enrolment of non-native speakers of Lithuanian increased from 6 100 to 7 578 students between 1995 and 1998 and the percentage choosing instruction in their native languages – Polish or Russian – decreased from 10.2% to 8.4%.[7] The requirement to offer courses in languages other than Lithuanian is one of the many reasons for a high teacher to student ratio.

Labour market vocational education and training

In 1992 Lithuania moved to set up a VET system adapted to the labour market. Its aim was and still is, to bridge the gap between supply and demand of labour for Lithuania's rapidly changing economic circumstances. This system is governed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (MoSSL) and operated through the Labour Market Training Authority (LMTA) which is now a very major player in vocational training. LMTA's activities are broad, encompassing curriculum development and licensing, upgrading of qualifications and counselling and methodological work. It operates a network of 14 Labour Market Training Centres[8] and a network of six Labour Market Training Services.[9] At the time of the review, 52 vocational training Stage I programmes (leading to work permits) and 131 vocational training Stage II programmes (leading to state-approved professional qualifications) were being offered through its network. It also provides vocational guidance, training and support for the disabled. The Authority is advised on issues relevant to its mission by an Expert Council operating on a tri-partite basis and a Principals' Conference.

Labour Market Training Centres focus principally on the unemployed but also provide short courses for the employed whose present qualification is in low demand and non-formal vocational training programmes for adults. They also provide counselling and career guidance services. Training services are in general oriented to local needs with curriculum content offered at different Training Centres varying from Centre to Centre by roughly 30%. Plans are in place to develop a network of county LMTA offices[10] and training centres to be used for "disseminating the latest innovations in the sphere of labour market training".[11]

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A second agency linked to the MoSSL is the Labour Exchange that provides co-ordination between employers' needs and potential employees. It also has an important role in supporting the integration of vulnerable groups into the labour market. Its activities include the recording of job openings and the registration of unemployed citizens; the disposal of funds from the State Employment Fund; short-term labour market forecasting; studies on the efficiency of training programmes; and services to the unemployed. A network of 46 local labour exchanges operates throughout the country. However, to date, only half of job seekers use the services of the LE; the remainder use other informal means such as newspaper advertisements, friends, relatives and direct contact with employers.[12]

The main source of financing for LMTA programmes is the Unemployment Fund. Every year, by Ministerial Decree, the number of training recipients is decided and consequently, funds are channelled through the LE for activities. Potential students who apply to the LE are selected by Labour Market Training Services to attend courses at Labour Market Training Centres. Due to the current levels of financial hardship, training delivery is subject to financial availability and not to local needs. The foreseen restructuring of employers' contributions to vocational education and training[13] is a welcome measure. (See the section on financing below.)

A broad move to modular curriculum design is on the way in order to provide a higher level of efficiency and flexibility. The modular approach will eventually enable the LMTA to go beyond Stages 1 and 2 in their programmes and increase mobility between the various institutions offering vocational training.

Counselling is a very important role for Labour Market Training Services and demand roughly doubled between 1996 and 1999. This increase validates the importance as well as the need for counselling at this stage of economic transition in Lithuania. In 1998, 84.5% (27 366 out of 32 401 total) of those consulted were unemployed. This figure, however, appears very small in comparison to the total number registered as unemployed (27 366 out of 247 000 or 11%). In the first half of 1999 the number of people who pursued counselling services was 23 701.

Labour Market Training Services also co-operate with vocational guidance departments of auxiliary providers, the education institutions, which fall under the jurisdiction of the MoES. They co-operate in information exchange, strategy and programme development and in development of psychological diagnostic methods.

Training needs for the unemployed

Since 1991 the private sector (1999: 31.3% state, 68.7% private) has taken over from the state as the prime employer (1991: 70.2% state, 29.8% private). Key labour market indicators are presented in Table 34.

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Table 34. **Key labour market indicators**

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999 I q	1999 II q
Total population (in thousands)	3 736.5	3 720.8	3 714.8	3709.5	3705.6	3702.6	3700.8	3 699
Working age and older population (in thousands)	2 846.4	2 848.2	2 853.9	2 862.1	2 873.3	2 875	..	..
Labour force (in thousands)	1 859.3	1 740.7	1 752.6	1 783.5	1 773.7	1 769.8	1 749.1	..
Employment rate (%)	62.5	58.8	57.6	58	58.1	57.6	..	..

Source: National Observatory of Lithuania, 1999 Country Report draft 1.

Table 35. **Unemployment rates**

	Sept. 94	Sept. 95	Sept. 96	Sept. 97	May 98	Nov. 98
Unemployment rate (Labour force survey data)		11.8	15.6	14.1	14.3	12.6
Unemployment rate (Labour Exchange data)	3.5	5.8		5.6	6.2	6.5

Source: *Labour force, employment and unemployment* IV Quarter 1998, Statistics Lithuania, Pub. B323 and UNDP, *Lithuanian Human Development Report* 1997.

The number of unemployed and the unemployment rate are determined in Lithuania from both registrations with the Labour Exchange and from labour force surveys. There are large differences in their findings. According to a labour force survey conducted in September 1997, the number of unemployed was 2.5 times higher than that registered with the LE and the unemployment level was more than twice as high as the registered one (Table 35).[14] As in previous surveys, the highest level of unemployment was found among young people and decreased proportionately with age. The registered unemployment rate in Lithuania has fluctuated around 6% since the middle of the nineties with an expected increase in 1999 and 2000. The registered unemployment rate fluctuated around 6% during the middle of the 1990s, but picked up after 1998 increasing to 8.4% in 1999 and 11.5% in 2000. For the first quarter of 2001, registered unemployed was at 13.2%, but these figures hide major regional differences ranging from 3.3% in Prienai to 15.5% in Lazdijai.

Effectiveness of labour market training programmes

According to labour force survey data for 1999,[15] the composition of the unemployed by educational background was the following:

- 5.7% had higher education.
- 16.7% had "special secondary" (presumably college type) education.

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- 40.5% had vocational school education.
- 37.1% were unskilled.

For the second quarter of 1999, 43%[16] of students graduating from Labour Market Training Centres' programmes became employed but only 28%[17] became employed after attending qualification improvement programmes. The team believes that these figures may suggest not only a qualitative inadequacy of training programmes[18] especially for Stage II programmes but also problems associated with professional mobility; lack of flexibility; relative absence of measures to support vulnerable groups either by the state or by local and regional authorities; and/or lack of active participation of social partners at the local level.

For the period 1998/9, approximately 20 000 students up to 16 years of age did not attend school.[19] The problems of youth unemployment and dropouts should become priority areas with more attention and financial investments. The existence of about 100 000 youth and young adults in the labour market with no qualification as a consequence of the period of economic hardship is a concern.

Despite economic changes, the percentage of workers employed in various sectors did not significantly change in the period between 1995 and 1998.[20] Table 36 gives a profile of problem areas in various sectors.

The problem of regional unemployment disparities needs to be considered. The existing five-fold gap in unemployment rates (for 1999: 3.3% in Prienai, 15.5% in Lazdijai)[21] between geographical regions in the country calls for an integrated

Table 36. **Employment and unemployment by economic activity**

1998	Employed by economic activity (%)			Unemployed by former economic activity (%)		
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
Agriculture, hunting, forestry, fishing	55.7	2.1	18	28.6	3.6	9.8
Industry	10.2	24	19.9	25.1	29.2	28.2
Electricity, gas, water supply	1.1	2.5	2.1			
Construction	2.3	8.2	6.5	6.1	13.3	11.6
Trade, repair	6.6	18.3	14.8	10.9	19.9	17.7
Hotel, restaurant	0.9	2	1.7	7.2	4.2	4.9
Transport, storage, communication	3.6	8	6.7	3.5	10.1	8.5
Financial, real estate, renting, business activities	1.3	5.6	4.4	1.8	3.8	3.3
Public administration and defence, social security	3.9	5.2	4.8	1.3	3.3	2.8
Education, health and social work	12.3	18.7	16.9	10.9	6.6	7.7
Other community, social and personal service activities	2.2	5.3	4.4	4.5	5.8	5.5

Source: Statistics Lithuania, *Labour force, employment and unemployment IV Quarter* 1998, Pub. B323.

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approach from all relevant ministries, educational providers, social partners and regional and local authorities.

Vocational education and training and agricultural reform

Lithuania is in the process of a widespread agricultural reform. The priorities of this reform include the modernisation of farming methods and introduction of new technologies, an improvement in the employment rate, environmentally friendly practices and the reform of agricultural training. At the same time, the creation of conditions of sustained economic growth, job creation and unemployment alleviation in a framework of balanced regional development and EU market integration are prime aims of Lithuania's EU accession programme.[22] Among others, the outlined conditions for achieving the above goals include structural changes in the sector, modernisation, lowering production costs, commercialisation and promotion of products, land reform and the support of training systems.

Although the value of training and retraining in the area of agriculture during the transition is gaining higher recognition, motivation among adult farmers for retraining[23] is lacking. The need for training the young in new technologies and market conditions as well as retraining of adults is evident. At the local level, it is important to promote the recognition of the potential benefits of entrepreneurial activities such as ecotourism, agricultural pollution mitigation, ecological agriculture, processing/packaging of products, exports, SME management, health and sanitation etc. and recognise the associated training needs.

The role of local authorities, local chambers and local MoSSL institutions is critical in the process of reforming vocational education in the agricultural sector. It is from the fruitful co-operation between all actors involved, that the industry will venture into new areas, modernising practices and consequently changing cultures.

The use of distance education in vocational education and training[24]

The use of distance methodologies is not at all widely spread in vocational schools in Lithuania. However, there has been an important shift to learner-centred teaching strategies. Teachers are either quite heavily involved in the preparation of learning packages or using materials developed by others. Under the EC-Phare vocational education and training reform programme, modular learning materials were specifically designed and prepared to support the delivery of the new curricula. Although these are not distance materials *per se*, they are important developmentally in shifting teachers' approaches to active learning. This shift is a precondition to the development of effective distance and flexible learning materials and will stand Lithuania in good stead when ICT equipping and infrastructure

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is sufficiently established to support a multi-sector, countrywide distance learning system.

It should be noted that an impetus to the creation of these learning materials has been the chronic shortage of relevant vocational textbooks particularly in the Lithuanian language. A National Resource Centre now houses and disseminates the excellent learning materials produced to date.

Many vocational colleges, on the other hand, do have distance learning modes operating and the number of students is now steadily increasing after vocational correspondence education almost ceased to exist in the first years after independence. In general these "correspondence" modes still operate on the Soviet model with either weeks of face-to-face attendance required or are in reality part-time extra mural courses. Nevertheless, the increasing student numbers indicate a growing demand especially in the light of many having to pay for courses. In the 1998/99 school year 7 800 of the 33 881 students at colleges or approximately 23% were studying by correspondence.

Exceptionally, Kaunas College of Technology has an extremely high percentage of students undertaking studies by distance methods. 540 of their 1 520 students (some 36%) complete the same courses as day students but take four instead of three years to complete them. This college is particularly well equipped with one computer for every eight students, has its own printing facilities and has been one of the key participants in EC-Phare learning materials development activities.

In Lithuania, together with its Baltic neighbours, Latvia and Estonia and indeed all countries newly independent from Soviet rule, the training and retraining needs of the existing workforce are enormous. The potential for using distance methodologies to assist in this task has not yet been realised in Lithuania. They allow for both a quick adaptation of skills to market changing needs and their use can save on resources needed for traditional training.

In particular, the pressing need for continuing training in upgrading of skills for workers while they are still employed is relatively unexplored. Studies around the world have now shown the cost effectiveness of applying ODL methods and especially new technologies to industrial training.[25] However, it should be realised that they assume a level of information and communication technology equipment and infrastructure that is not yet available to workers in Lithuania's industrial sectors and also a degree of employer co-operation that generally does not currently exist in Lithuania.

The review team saw little evidence of private enterprise encouragement of workers to upgrade their skills and qualifications. The National Observatory's in-depth study of continuing vocational training (1998) states that even for those enterprises which could be considered to have good prospects, only 25% have any

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plans for the upgrading of their workers' qualifications and skills. The Observatory reports a developing system of "ejection" rather than retraining. Without encouragement from employers, the prospect for workers of viable continuing vocational education especially using new technologies is poor given the low PC penetration rates in the general population and low incomes which preclude individual payment for retraining.

A positive model for continuing vocational education by flexible learning methods exists, however, in the Institute of Banking, Finance and Insurance programme for the qualification upgrading of bankers. This programme was financially supported by the EC-Phare project.

On the positive side, the move towards a modular approach in the new curricula is a valuable first step and opens the way to the development of sets of competency-based distance and flexible learning materials to accompany these new modules. Such learning materials are well suited to working adults to acquire a qualification or upgrade their existing qualifications and skills base at their own rythm. They can help to break the fixed-time-and-place requirement for skills training that is often difficult for enterprises to accommodate.

Financing of vocational education and training

The Law on Vocational Education and Training[26] stipulates that initial vocational education and training shall be funded from *i)* the state budget, *ii)* municipal budgets, *iii)* Vocational Training Fund and *iv)* other sources.

In 1998, the total budget for vocational education was 175 million LTL. This sum corresponds to 6.4% of the total state budget for education and to 0.41% of GDP.[27] Whereas the percentage of GDP has remained stable since 1995, there has been an increase from 5.7% to 6.4% of total state budget during the same period.

The financial contribution from municipalities is insignificant and the Vocational Training Fund foreseen in the law to support practical training has not as yet been established. It is unlikely that this will happen in the near future partly due to the present economic crisis and partly due to opposition by the Ministry of Finance to any kind of fund resourced fully or partly by the state budget.

The law[28] gives the right to vocational education institutions to engage in commercial activity. Though the law says that such income shall be used for education and training purposes, the situation is not fully transparent, as all generated income of state institutions becomes state budget. There is therefore no guarantee that the individual fund raiser can retain the funds for additional activities, although this appears to be the general practice. Few reliable statistics on the total amount generated from other sources exist, nevertheless, it may be concluded that the state budget is by far the most important and reliable source of funding.

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In expenditures for 2000[29] for vocational schools, salaries accounted for the highest share of expenditures at 50.4% (up from 32% in 1999 and 51.3% planned for 2001) followed by grants, accommodations and meals at 19.6% (down from 31% in 1999 and 22.3% planned for 2001). Taxes took up 15.6% (up from 15% in 1999 and 15.9% planned for 2001), whereas equipment and maintenance made up 0.43% (down from 6% in 1999 and 0% planned for 2001). Insignificant amounts remained for development of new training material and textbooks and other activities (0.1% for 2000 down from 3% in 1999 and 0.12% planned for 2001).

The allocations to schools are based on a budget formula including parameters such as number of students, required premises, required equipment and its maintenance, energy consumption and required training materials depending on the type of programmes offered.

Both the Labour Exchange and the Labour Market Training Authority are financed from the Employment Fund, which is managed by the MoSSL. The main source of this fund is the compulsory unemployment insurance contributions paid by employers (paid in to the SODRA State Social Insurance and then channelled to the Employment Fund). The expenditure of this fund in 1997 exceeded 114 million LTL (€ 32 522 180), of which 36.8% was used for financing active labour market programmes (mainly for vocational training), 44.4% for unemployment benefits and 18.8% for labour market institutions (the LMTA and the LE).[30] The proposed restructuring of employers' contributions to vocational education and training[31] is a welcome measure. According to plans, 80% of 2% of an enterprise's salaries budget will go towards the enterprise's needs and the remaining 20% will go to the Vocational Education and Training Fund. The training of the unemployed as well as unemployment prevention programmes will be covered by the Social Insurance Fund.

Status of reform and policy issues

Vocational education reform process

Vocational education went through three stages of reform during the nineties. 1990/1993 was a period of delegation of responsibilities to the school level. Schools became responsible for the development of curricula, teaching and learning material as well as for the organisation of final exams. This meant great freedom to schools who at the same time were, however, left in a vacuum without any real support structures at the central level. MoES nominates the Headmaster who in turn is responsible for selecting teachers. 1994/1995 saw the creation of the Register of Studies and Training Programmes and of the Register of Education, Science and Studies Institutions. The present phase of reform, begun in 1996, saw the adoption of the new Law on Vocational Education and Training in 1997 and of the

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White Paper on Vocational Education and Training in 1998. These documents provide the foundations for the creation of a modern vocational education and training system. Because of their significance in Lithuania's reform agenda, their main points have been outlined below. This period also saw the establishment of two central support institutions, namely the Methodical Centre for Vocational Education and Training and the Resource Centre for Teaching Material.

Key provisions of the Law on Vocational Education are:

- The definition of vocational education and training as 1) initial vocational education and training and 2) labour market vocational training with two main types of vocational education and training institutions: 1) vocational schools teaching theoretical, practical vocational education and training and general education and 2) vocational training centres, teaching theoretical and practical vocational education and training.
- Access to labour market vocational training is given to employees in danger of unemployment, the unemployed and people starting their own businesses. The minimum age is 18 years old, unless the person has already acquired initial vocational education.
- The management of initial vocational education and training is given to MoES whereas labour market training is controlled by MoSSL but MoES must license all institutions.
- The law also establishes the competence of each ministry:
  - MoES is responsible for initial vocational education and training; decides on the number of institutions, issues vocational education and training licenses; decides on pre- and in-service teacher training, organises preparation and publication of national curricula; and teaching/learning material.
  - MoSSL has responsibility for labour market vocational training and decides the number of institutions; organises vocational guidance; establishes additional qualifications for labour market vocational training teachers; and organises in-service teacher training.
- The main foreseeable involvement of social partners is their role in qualification examinations where they shall represent one third of each examination commission and take part in defining requirements for programmes.
- Vocational education and training institutions may take the initiative in creating new programmes and may also engage in commercial activity, on the condition that the income is used for educational and training purposes.

The White Paper proposes a large number of changes to the present system. Some of the key issues for initial vocational education are to:

- Develop remedial study programmes for Stage II graduates to allow them to acquire a general secondary education certificate.

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- Create technological gymnasia whose main aim will be to create an alternative to traditional general secondary education at the same time as to prepare for studies at HE institutions.
- Restructure Stages II and III curricula to align with the higher level of general education of new students following the change to 10 years of elementary and basic school.
- Involve vocational schools in the provision of vocational qualifications to adults through evening and distance education courses.
- Increase the role of social partners in the development of national vocational standards. The chambers shall control final qualification examinations.
- Deepen the relationship of schools with local authorities and social partners.
- For advanced vocational education and training:
  - Grant the status of non-university higher education institution to a selection of colleges to create ISCED/97 5B level institutions.
  - Convert those colleges/advanced vocational education and training schools that do not qualify for the status of non-university HEI to vocational schools.
- For labour market vocational education and training:
  - Set up local labour market training authorities that will collect information on labour market needs and provide counselling, organise and implement labour market training and quality assurance. They will also continue to organise tendering to select training providers.
  - Training will be provided directly by vocational training centres.

For non formal adult vocational education (see Chapter 5 on Adult education):

- Design new curricula in accordance with occupational profile and vocational standards and ensure that social partners are involved in this process.
- Increase emphasis on core skills.

The White Paper also addresses quality assurance (internal and external), teacher training, financing with an emphasis of increasing the direct contributions of employers to finance training of staff directly and partly via a Vocational Training Fund, vocational counselling and private provision of vocational education.

Bottom up reform

Where the new Law and the White Paper are of major importance in systemic reform of vocational education and training, the team saw good evidence of bottom up reform also taking place. The EC-Phare vocational education and training reform programme has been the chief catalyst. Under this programme operating in

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close co-operation with MoES, pilot vocational schools received external assistance to develop new curricula, acquire new equipment, develop new learning material and some basic training of teachers and head masters. This created a critical mass of people exposed to new and different methodologies in vocational education and provided a good basis for strategic discussions on the future of the vocational education system. The present phase of reform continues with the dissemination of results to new pilot schools and the system in general. The preparation of a concept for a national qualifications framework including the development of occupational and vocational standards, national assessment, certification and quality assurance system covering both initial and continuing vocational education and training is being tackled. This phase has also seen initial efforts to establish pre-service and in-service teachers' and trainers' programmes.

The next phase in the reform process will cover the challenge of implementing these reforms. This will be a crucial period in which the good intentions must be realised, a phase which will not be possible without making the necessary financial resources available and it is to be expected that implementation will be significantly slowed due to the lack of funding. According to MoES, it is expected that less than 10% of the amount requested for the implementation of the White Paper in year 2000 can be made available. Nevertheless, the National Resource Centre, which plays an important role in disseminating new approaches on curriculum development, teaching and learning materials, school management etc, has been imbedded in the system and provides a significant and sustainable contribution to reform.

Co-operation between MoES *and* MSSL *in the reform process*

Although both the Law and the White Paper have been developed in close co-operation between MoES and MoSSL through the Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority, co-operation at the level of implementation of reform still needs to be improved. Presently, there are discussions on whether to place the Labour Market Training Authority under the purview of MoES as a means of optimising resources and to ensure the underway creation of a comprehensive initial and continuing training system. At the same time there are discussions to create regional units encompassing both initial and continuing training centres. Directions seem divergent and will prove costly unless resolved.

Effects of the introduction of ten years of compulsory education

As discussed in Chapter 3, the introduction of ten years of compulsory education as of year 1999/2000 will have major implications for vocational education. Students entering vocational education directly from 10-year basic education will have a stronger general education background. This will require revision of vocational education curricula and study programmes. At the time of the OECD review,

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it was not yet clear – at least to the OECD team – what guidance the MoES had given vocational schools regarding the changes. Teaching staff at vocational schools visited by the team expressed concern about their lack of preparedness for students with ten instead of nine years of general education.

The proposed introduction of technical gymnasium and non-university higher education institutions

A number of questions also remained, in the view of the OECD team, regarding the implications for secondary and post-secondary vocational education of the development of technical gymnasia and the movement of some "vocational" colleges to the higher education non-university level. It can be expected that technical gymnasia will compete for students who would traditionally have gone to upper-secondary vocational schools. It remains unclear what will happen to the colleges that do not qualify as institutions of non-university higher education. Will these colleges turn towards upper-secondary or post-secondary education or will they cease to exist? Graduates from technical gymnasia will have a different educational background compared to graduates from general secondary education, which may in turn require adjustments to the curricula of post-secondary vocational education. Because the reform of upper secondary education and the development of higher education-level colleges is well underway, the OECD team recommends that resolution of the ambiguities regarding the implications for vocational education be given a high priority.

Qualification framework

An overarching national qualification framework guaranteeing labour market relevance, transparency and quality is not in place at the moment. The development of occupational standards is the responsibility of the Labour Market Training Authority whereas the development of vocational education standards is with MoES. While a number of vocational education standards have been drafted, hardly any occupational standards exist. Sector analyses have not been undertaken regularly to date. This fact has prompted the planning for a pilot project funded by the European Training Foundation (ETF) to begin in year 2000. The project will assist in developing a methodology for the elaboration of sector analyses.

New curricula based on those vocational standards existing are developed by schools with the support of the Methodical Centre for Vocational Education and Training. Leaving curricula development in the hands of the schools has been a deliberate measure to encourage grassroots commitment. The curricula are assessed by an expert commission in MoES with the participation of social partners. Support has primarily been given to pilot schools participating in international projects, though dissemination to other schools organised under the joint

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efforts of the present EC-Phare vocational education and training reform programme and the MoES. The number of schools participating remains limited. Assessment of final qualification examinations is done by schools themselves apart from a few regions where social partners are actively involved. Quality assurance still needs to be developed and the role of regional inspectorates is limited.

Role of external assistance

Lithuania's vocational education reform process in practice has been greatly supported by external assistance and, given the country's financial situation, it is difficult to see that much reform would have been possible without it. New equipment and teaching and learning material have primarily been made available to schools participating in such projects.

The EC-Phare programme has been the biggest contributor to vocational education reform in Lithuania. The 1994 EC-Phare vocational education and training reform programme (€ 4 million) supported reform in 12 vocational education institutions (together with 12 colleges and three labour market training centres). The programme has included development of new curricula, teaching and learning material, teacher and head master training, the creation of the Resource Centre and the Methodological Centre and the provision of equipment. Simultaneously, support was given for the development of the Law on Vocational Education and Training and in particular the White Paper. The 1997 EC-Phare vocational education and training reform programme (€ 1 million) supported the dissemination of the results to other schools, provided institution building support to ensure that the National Resources Centre becomes embedded in the system and for the development of a concept for a national qualifications framework. Support was also extended for the development of a two-year modular vocational teacher training programme.

Lithuania also participated in the EU Leonardo da Vinci programme in 1998 and 1999 and intends to continue this participation during 2000/2006. This is primarily a project based programme rather than one aiming at assisting systemic reform.

The ETF supported a project on standards development in 1999 and continued in year 2000 with a pilot project on the development of a methodology for sector needs analysis. In 1999, the Foundation also started a major project in Latvia and Lithuania together with Denmark and Finland on in-service teacher training for vocational teachers. As in all other Central and Eastern European countries, the Foundation has also supported the establishment of a National Observatory which now provides useful background information on the vocational education and training system in the country.

An estimated € 4.8 million[32] has been received through bi-lateral projects especially with Germany and the Nordic countries.

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Sustaining reform

Unfortunately, under the present economic situation in Lithuania, it will be difficult to maintain the speed of implementation of vocational education reform. It is therefore important that human resources development continue to be supported within the framework of the EC-Phare programme year 2000 to 2006 and does not lose impetus. It is also important that MoES and MoSSL and other relevant authorities set coherent priorities for support for human resources development in the National Development Plan and that these be translated into a clear strategy for implementation of the reform and related project proposals.

However, it must be underlined that implementation of reform is not only a question of financing. Only a small nucleus of staff in MoES and the EC-Phare Vocational Education and Training Project Management Unit together with the National Resource Centre and the group of disseminators appear in a position to take the reform forward. It is important that institutional capacity to implement the reform continue to be strengthened with the support of such programmes.

External assistance has been fragmented, the majority of actions being school to school based. This may have been necessary at the outset of reform in order to create a group of people able to develop relevant policies and strategies. However, while it can be an important eye opener to a school and its staff to work in partnership with foreign schools, it is important that MoES ensure that the results achieved are channelled into overall systemic reform as set out in the White Paper and subsequent implementation plans.

National and regional policy development and co-ordination

The development of the White Paper has been a major achievement bringing together representatives of key stakeholders. It has proven the ability of MoES to co-operate closely with the Labour Market Training Authority and other stakeholders. However, this achievement has not been reflected to the same extent in increased co-operation and co-ordination between the two vocational education and training networks in the field. Consideration should be given to the role of the National Vocational Education and Training Council which has shown itself to be a very useful mechanism for policy development and was closely involved in the elaboration of the White Paper. To date the Council has had a consultative role only.

Currently, there is little policy development at regional level for vocational education. In fact, regions and municipalities have a very limited role in vocational education and at present, the institutional capacity of the regions is not conducive to changing this situation. However, consideration should be given to the possibility of devolving administrative responsibilities to the regional level, allowing the MoES to concentrate on policy development and strategy. Regional vocational education and training boards have been set up with the participation of the

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social partners but, in reality, have a limited role and most are barely functioning. If regions were to take a real role, the overall co-ordination between general education and vocational education could be improved, better reflecting the needs of the individual regions. This role could also be extended to include colleges as well as the Labour Market Training Centres.

Optimising the school network and regional co-ordination

The number of vocational schools has remained virtually unchanged since 1990. The average size of schools is small. While MoES appears to be open to looking at ways of optimising the school network, MoARD has retained its position that the small rural agricultural vocational schools fulfill an indispensable social function in the community and therefore must be retained.

All vocational schools came under the responsibility of MoES as of July 2000. It will be important that MoES seizes this opportunity and carries out a thorough analysis of the existing provision of vocational education in order to be able to decide on the best ways of optimising the school network.

MoES is planning to create regional training centres in a few pilot regions as a means to improve the quality of vocational education and training. The Labour Market Training Centres should also be part of the regional training centres. Such regional training centres would provide a good possibility to involve more closely these regional authorities and the Regional Vocational Education and Training Councils and thus ensure a greater capacity to respond to local labour market needs.

Co-ordination at the regional level should not only include vocational schools and the Labour Market Training Centre, but also general secondary education and essentially colleges where there are plans to create one larger college in each region. Regional capacity to co-ordinate and influence secondary and college education offerings becomes even more essential with the move towards technical gymnasia and non-university higher education institutions.

Student demand for vocational education and articulation issues

Student demand for basic vocational education has increased significantly, as has demand for secondary vocational education (stage III) which also provides a general secondary education certificate and thus access to college and higher education. On the other hand, demand for secondary vocational education alone has been reduced by one third (see Figure 16). This reflects partly the fact that the drop-out rates of basic education have been reduced and that the potential drop-outs prefer to obtain a basic vocational education. The increase in interest in Stage III can be explained by student desire to create the biggest exit possibilities – acquiring both qualifications to find a job and to continue education at a higher level.

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In 1998, of those who continued school after having completed basic education, 30% went on to vocational schools and 70% on to general education schools. Of vocational school graduates 1% progressed to higher education and 3% to college education, whereas 8.5% of secondary school graduates continued their studies at vocational schools in post-secondary education. This shows that the option for Stage III graduates to progress at the next education level is not utilised to any great extent.[33]

The drop out rate from vocational education institutions was 9% in the school year 1997/98.[34] This rate has not changed significantly over the last five years. Presently there are few programmes to facilitate reintegration into the school system of those having left vocational education without a qualification. Opportunities are also lacking for early school leavers from basic and general secondary education.

A relatively large percentage of vocational school graduates enter directly into unemployment. An analysis of unemployment figures according to educational attainment level show there is a relatively high rate of unemployment for people with vocational education. This indicates that vocational education continues to produce graduates who are not meeting the new skills requirements of the labour market.

Counselling and guidance

The Law on Vocational Education and Training stipulates that MoES is responsible for ensuring vocational guidance at general education and vocational schools whereas MoSSL is responsible for vocational guidance of the labour market and youth[35] although it has primarily delegated this responsibility to the Labour Market Training Authority. There are presently six vocational guidance centres in the largest urban centres catering to students and all adults, unemployed as well as employed. In addition, a multi-media Vocational Information Centre has been established in Vilnius at the labour office.

In order to ensure guidance and counselling services geared specifically to students, especially secondary school students, a new Vocational Guidance Division was established in 1997 by MoES. In 1998, the first year of operation, only a few students used this service. Out of 65 000 graduates from general education schools only 700 (or 1%) consulted the Vocational Guidance Centre compared to 9 000 (14%) who consulted the centres under the Labour Market Training Authority. Also the latter has increased its efforts to cater for youth and in 1999 a Youth Employment Centre was established.[36] In 1998, the government also decided that vocational guidance centres under the auspices of MoES should be established in all regions. The initiatives taken are good but care should be exercised to ensure that they are implemented to offer guidance services to all students.

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Quality and engagement of social partners

Quality in vocational education depends fundamentally on close links with the labour market on the different levels, especially since preparation for the demands of the labour market is a precondition for employability. Because vocational education in Lithuania had its origins in a command economy, relevance to the current and developing economy is a major problem. Engaging a new generation of social partners in every dimension of vocational education must be a priority. Social partners can play important roles in identifying developing professions, defining professional qualifications, providing practical training for students and providing access to equipment and training materials.

The participation of social partners in vocational education is regulated by law.[37] They are represented in the Vocational Education and Training Council and play an advisory role in policy development. They were actively involved in the preparation of the White Paper. Regional Councils have also been established across the country. In addition, they participate in industrial Lead Bodies of which 14 have been established. These should be actively involved in formulating occupational and vocational standards, respectively. Furthermore, social partners are expected to play an active role in setting requirements of and actively taking part in final examinations leading to a qualification.

In reality, it has been difficult to get the social partners to be actively involved in the definition of occupational and vocational standards. (In fact, only three occupational standards have been developed so far). Also the participation in most of the regional vocational education councils is practically nil, but social partner participation in final examinations was tried out in Panevezys on a pilot basis and has now been expanded to a further two regions.

At the school level, the degree of involvement of enterprises differs widely. There is still much space for improving the links between vocational schools and enterprises to create real partnerships. Placement of students for practical work is still not available for all. It is important that incentives are developed to create better links at the school level as well as to seek a more active involvement in the definition of standards.

Teacher training and retraining

Pre- and in-service teacher training for vocational education teachers has been a neglected area in Lithuania. Only a small number of teachers in schools participating in international projects have received retraining in new teaching methodologies and in how to use new equipment and technology. The most urgent needs are to provide VET teachers with pedagogical competencies and to enlarge their narrow technical qualifications.

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Some initiatives to remedy this situation have been started with international support. Under the EC-Phare vocational education and training reform programme, a two-year modular pre-service teacher training programme for vocational education teachers has been developed. Another initiative is supported by Finland, Denmark and the ETF to develop an in-service teacher training programme to improve pedagogical skills of vocational education teachers.

These initiatives are carried out at Vytautas Magnus University (Centre of Vocational Education and Training Studies). This centre also takes part in a Leonardo da Vinci project. However, it appears that the sustainability of the centre and its role as a frontrunner in the development of pre-service and in-service teacher training for vocational education teachers may be unsustainable without external assistance. This is an important area needing support from MoES resources.

Recommendations on vocational education and training

Sustaining and financing reform

- Ensure that reform plans are implemented. Lithuania has made good progress in vocational education and training reform during the last decade and now faces an important implementation challenge to ensure that the reform plans will be carried through. The excellent dissemination activities of the results under the EC-Phare vocational education and training reform programme should be further enforced and expanded to the whole system.
- Provide sufficient finances to implement and sustain the reform initiatives already begun. So far, many of the reform initiatives have been supported by external assistance. Although the need for such financial support will continue for the foreseeable future, the Lithuanian Government must make the reform of VET a priority when allocating financial resources. The reform cannot be supported indefinitely through external assistance.
- Give future consideration to the establishment of a training levy on enterprises with the aim of establishing a training culture and easing the state's financial burden for skills upgrading.

Establishing a national qualifications framework

- Implement the comprehensive national qualifications framework presently under development. The necessary human and financial resources should be made available to ensure that the development of occupational and vocational standards picks up speed and that standards are based on adequate labour market needs analyses. The curriculum development process at the schools should be guaranteed efficient support from the central support

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centres. The certification, assessment and quality assurance systems should be further developed.

Teacher training

- Continue the development of human resources in vocational education in order to sustain reform. Particular attention should be paid to training of vocational education teachers. The present initiatives to support pre-service and in-service training for vocational education teachers should be carried through and will require additional resources.

Co-ordination of the system and of stakeholder efforts

- Increase co-ordination and co-operation between all parties involved. In particular, there is a need for more efficient co-ordination between the MoES and MoSSL activities in vocational education and training. Linkages should be developed between training programmes for transferability; promotion of involvement of local stakeholders and co-operation at local level to serve local needs. Linkages will be important between the new College concept and the higher level of training provision of the LMTA. Duplication of efforts should be avoided especially in the light of scarce financial means.
- Provide incentives to ensure that social partners play an active role in the identification of labour market needs and in the assessment of final examinations particularly at the regional level.
- Establish links between the different sub-systems of the education system and provide support to all players. Changes in one area, for example, the introduction of ten years compulsory education, will influence the other parts and can not be seen in isolation. It is especially important to ensure that links are created between:
  - General secondary education and vocational secondary education.
  - Vocational secondary education and post-secondary vocational education, on the one hand and the college level education, on the other.
- Place a high priority on resolving the ambiguities in the directions that vocational education should take as a consequence of the movement to 10-year basic school, the development of technical gymnasia and the move of some vocational colleges to the higher non-university level. Give priority to:
  - Clearer communication with vocational schools about the purposes and implications of these changes.
  - Providing support for teachers (*e.g.* curricular materials and in-service training) to adapt in study programmes and curricula as required by the changes.

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- Consider establishing regional training centres by utilising the existing network of institutions operated by MoES, MoARD and the Labour Market Training Authority. Establishing such centres may assist the process of closure of a number of the smaller schools that are not in a position to offer relevant vocational education to students. Access to a wide range of quality education should be the goal rather than access measured in terms of geographical vicinity of the vocational education institution.
- Take steps to ensure that the current tendering system for retraining work is fair and does not exclude vocational schools from success in the bidding process. Initially this may require some affirmative action on behalf of some vocational schools.
- Develop an integrated nation wide counselling/guidance/support/ information network, encompassing co-operative efforts of the three pertinent ministries (MoES, MoARD and MoSSL).

Labour market vocational training

- Focus the LMTA more on youth unemployment, long-term unemployed and regional disparities.
- Increase the flexibility for the Labour Market Training Authority (LMTA) by more frequent flows of information from the Labour Exchange. It appears that the main bulk of LMTA activities are dependent on flows from the Labour Exchange on a yearly basis. This situation not only creates constraints in the spectrum of work of the LMTA, but also excludes a significant number of potential beneficiaries of programmes.
- Improve data/information assimilation and management. The abundance of different data/results, different interpretation *e.g.* legal, international organisations/conventions, surveys) has to be bridged for reasons of coherence, transparency and adequacy. County specific studies on the profile of unemployment, training *vis-à-vis* sectoral needs, only exist for certain counties, the ones that appear to be in a better socio-economic standing. An effort should be made to have high-quality information for all counties in the near future.

The white paper

- Continue the commendable, collaborative effort that led to the recently published "White Paper on Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Lithuania". The White Paper gives a pragmatic view of the current situation in the country and formulates a vision that can be achieved in the years to come. The team hopes that the spirit of this process continues in the years to come and that funding is found to enable its recommendations to be implemented.

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Notes

1. Presently there are 338 curricula according to the Register of Studies and Training Programmes. A series of new professions has been introduced such as business and services.
2. This major change was decided in February 2000.
3. *National Observatory Country Report*, 1999, Table 2.7.
4. *Ibid.*, 1999, *p*. 47.
5. *Ibid.*, 1999, Table 1.12.
6. *Ibid.*, 1999, Tables 1.8 and 1.10.
7. *Ibid.*, 1999, Table 2.10.
8. Three in Vilnius, three in Kaunas, two in Panevezys, one in Klaipeda, Siauliai, Alytus, Marijampole, Utena and a Vocational Training and Management Institute.
9. Vilnius, Alytus, Kaunas, Panevezys, Siauliai, Klaipeda.
10. MoES, MoSSL, White Paper on Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Lithuania, 1999.
11. *Ibid., op. cit.* p. 36.
12. Statistics Lithuania. *Labour force, employment and unemployment*, IV Quarter 1998, Pub. B323.
13. MoES, MoSSL, White Paper on Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Lithuania, 1999.
14. *Lithuanian Human Development Report*, 1998, UNDP.
15. Statistics Lithuania, Labour Market and Employment II Quarter 1999, Publ. B324.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Darbo rinkos profesinis mokymas – efektyvus darbo jegos paklausos ir pasiulos derinimo veiksnys*, LMTA, 1998.
19. Draft Preliminary NDP – Lithuania.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*
22. Governmental European Integration Commission, Lithuania's EU Accession Programme, 1999.
23. *Darbo rinkos profesinis mokymas – efektyvus darbo jegos paklausos ir pasiulos derinimo veiksnys*, LMTA, 1998.
24. For additional information on distance education see Chapter 7.

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25. One example is an investigation of mixed mode delivery by James C Taylor, Educational technology applied to industrial training: An Australian case study, 1998 *www.icde.org/About ICDE/Forum/taylor.htm*.
26. Law on Vocational Education and Training 1997 – § 40 – Sources of Funding.
27. National Observatory Country Report – Lithuania, 1999, Table 7.1.
28. Law on Vocational Education and Training 1997 – § 17.2 – Rights and Obligations of Institutions engaged in theoretical and practical training.
29. National Observatory – Lithuania – 1999.
30. UNDP, *Lithuanian Human Development Report* 1998.
31. MoES, MoSSL, *White Paper on Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Lithuania*, 1999.
32. *National Observatory Country Report* – *Lithuania*, 1999, p. 96.
33. *Ibid.*, 1999, Figure 2.4.
34. *Ibid.*, 1999, Table 2.13.
35. The Law on Vocational Education and Training, 1997, Article 8.10 and Article 9.6.
36. National Observatory Country Report – Lithuania, 1999, Table 2.23.
37. The Law on Vocational Education and Training, 1997, Article 11.

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Chapter 5

Adult Education

Introduction

If people do not change, nothing can change. Every country in transition needs primarily very strong nets of adult education institutions and programmes. Adult education is the major part of the move from a centralised authoritarian state to a democratic state of civic society, from the old way of industrial production to survival upon the intellectual capacities of a person, his/her creativity and innovations.[1]

The concept of lifelong learning in Lithuania has yet to become a national priority. Following independence, many Lithuanian adults and certainly most enterprises appear to find it difficult to make the shift to a learning society rooted in recurrent education and training. Nevertheless, sensible steps are being taken by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour to create a supportive infrastructure for developing and encouraging the pursuit of lifelong learning for Lithuanians. These moves are backed by strong adult education associations and supported by international partners.

The period of Soviet rule has left many Lithuanian adults with a very narrow range of specific skills for work in industries that in many cases no longer exist. Particularly those who attended vocational schools are lacking in core transferable skills that enable an easy shift to new jobs. In many cases they are also lacking the study skills needed for retraining. Some did not complete upper secondary schooling and are now trying to do so by studying in adult secondary schools. This particular group appears to be taking this option rather than registering as unemployed and undertaking labour market retraining courses. Small "pockets" of Lithuanian adults also have literacy problems, for which there is little help available.

Lithuania's main focus during the transition has been on the unemployed rather than on the employed, who tend to be inappropriately skilled and poorly re-trained for new work demands. Industry is still of a mind-set that it is the responsibility of the state to retrain workers: it is still easier and cheaper to dismiss a worker and pick up one who is newly trained under the labour market training scheme. In this way, the costs of retraining are being borne by the state rather

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than by industry. Currently there is little industry participation or even interest in continuing education for their workers.

Governance and legislation

As a first step, the Lithuanian Parliament, *Seimas*, enacted a number of laws which pertain to adult education. The most recent is the Law on Adult Non-Formal Education, which came into force in July 1998. It regulates the system of non-formal adult education and establishes basic principles of its structure, activities and management. This Law applies to education for people aged 18 or over who undertake courses that do not lead to a state-regulated qualification.[2] It therefore covers a very wide range of learning activities both in the general and in the vocational education and training spheres. It regulates non-formal adult education activity in adult schools and centres, vocational education and training schools, colleges, higher education institutions and registered private providers. It aims to:

- help individuals satisfy their self-education needs and to develop their cultural interests.
- develop individuals' creative capacities and abilities.
- help individuals to become active citizens of a democratic society.
- create conditions for acquisition of theoretical knowledge and practical skills needed for an individual's professional activities and for upgrading qualifications.[3]

It specifically covers:

- organised purposeful self-education;
- courses varyingly described as day, evening, continuing, short-term and others;
- distance education;
- educational programmes provided by mass media.[1]

Under this law, a Non-Formal Adult Education Council responsible for policy development and co-ordination has been set up; the way has been cleared for some government financial support to marginal groups in need; the rights of participants are defined and the notion of paid leave for continuing vocational education under an employer/employee contract is supported.

Formal adult education and training

This denotes state-regulated and controlled adult education, training or studies leading to a state-recognised diploma or certificate. The Law on Education, the Law on Science and Studies and the Law on Vocational Education and Training

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regulate formal adult education, which includes general education, vocational education and training, college level education and higher education.

Other government steps

Apart from putting in place a legal framework for adult education, the Lithuanian government has taken a series of other steps that assist in the establishment of adult general education and continuing vocational education. These have included setting up the Division of Adult Education in the Ministry of Education and Science (1991); establishing the Labour Market Training Authority and its network of training centres (1992); opening the Vocational Education and Training Information Service (1996); and establishing the Vocational Education and Training Study Centre at Vytautas Magnus University.[5]

Association of Adult Education

An influential body in the sphere of adult education is the Lithuanian Association of Adult Education. Established in 1992, it is a public, non-profit independent union of individuals and organisations with a network of ten regional centres and international connections. It has had input into both policy and law formulation. It supports and organises teaching, research, publications, seminars, training for adult educators and international teacher exchange. Within relevant divisions of the MoES this Association is held in some regard and is consulted regularly.

General Adult Education: Secondary Schools for Adults

Lithuania inherited from Soviet rule a system of adult secondary schools. Under that system, secondary education was mandatory, resulting in state enterprises sending workers either to evening classes or to correspondence courses characterised by significant face-to-face on campus attendance. Oral reports describe reluctance on the part of the learners to attend these schools and there is general agreement that the standards were poor. A certificate gained at one of these institutions was generally regarded as inferior to one gained in normal secondary schools at the time.

A further problem arose when economic instability increased the number of street children and low-achieving youth who were able to enter adult secondary classes from the age of 14. This scenario eventually tipped the balance of these institutions away from serving a predominantly adult population. Around 1992/93, the problem came to a head and steps were taken to reclaim dedicated territory for adult learners through the formation of Youth Schools (see Chapter 6) to deal with the younger population and through revamping the approaches to adult pedagogy. Adult schools are now more attractive to adult learners.

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Figure 17. **The network of Lithuanian adult education association regional centres**

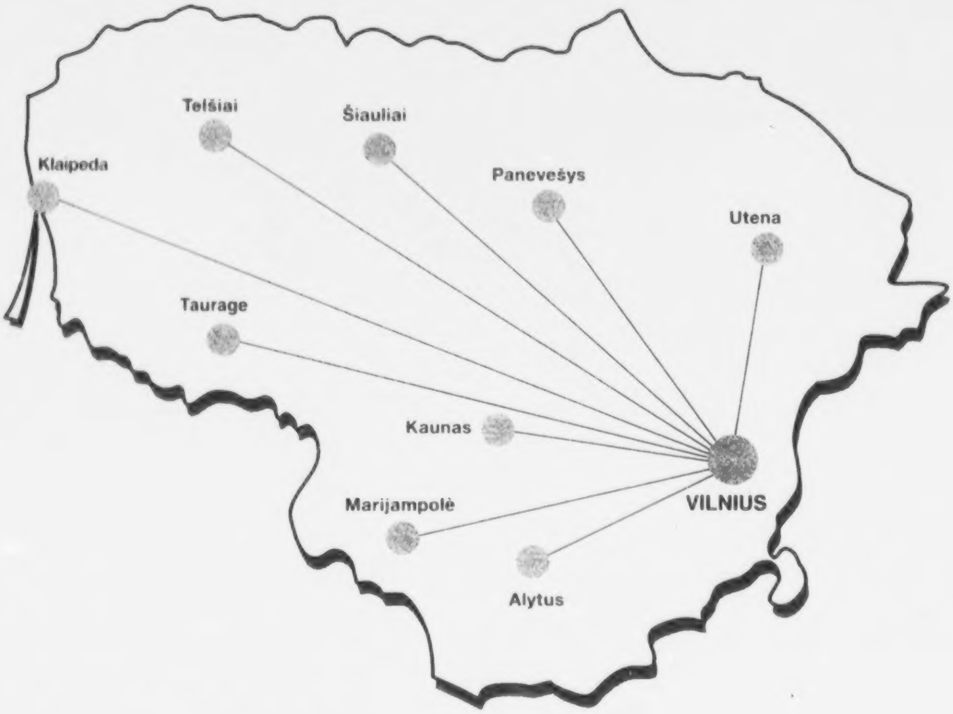
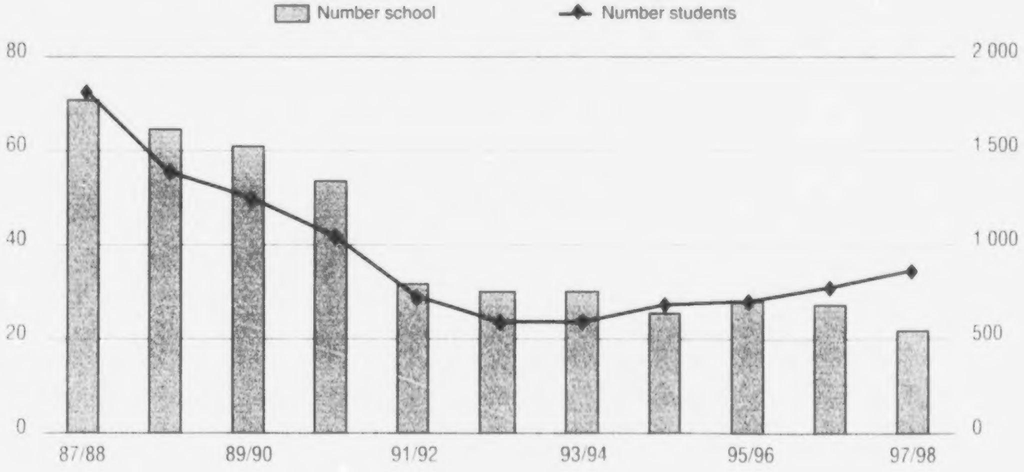


Figure 18. **School and student numbers in adult secondary**
Schools for adults 1987-98



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At the end of 1999, there were 22 secondary schools for adults, down from 71 in 1987/88. From a low point in 1992/93, the number of students has begun to climb. In 1999 these institutions were serving around 10 000 adults; the largest is the centre in Kaunas, with around 2 000 students. These 22 adult secondary institutions are located in eight of Lithuania's ten counties. Alytus and Utena are currently without dedicated adult institutions. (However, it should be noted that adult classes are also available in around 40 secondary schools.)

Of these 22 adult secondary schools, 10 have become Adult Education Centres in recent years. The shift to an Adult Education Centre model is a commendable improvement. These centres are broader in scope offering non-formal courses as well as formal education. On the whole, they adopt a modular approach in their offerings and emphasise flexibility in their delivery. The EC-Phare/TACIS Baltic Sea Cross-Border Co-operation: Small Project Facility has been particularly supportive in the establishment of these centres. It has focussed on shifting teaching methodologies to those more suitable for adult learners and has backed this shift with opportunities for adult educators to participate in visits and workshops in Denmark. The Danish government has also been generous in its donations of ICT equipment, as has the Open Society (Soros) Foundation.

In general, however, there is a serious shortage of teaching material, textbooks and equipment in these adult education institutions in Lithuania. Site visits to Adult Education centres revealed institutions with excellent teachers who were well versed in modern adult teaching methods and were trying to adopt a range of very flexible delivery methods to suit the individual needs of adult learners. They were struggling, because there are not enough learning materials and equipment to support these resource hungry pedagogical approaches. The allowance for textbooks at the time of the review was LTL 10 per student. Teachers have improvised with teacher-made resources or are operating from very old textbooks, many of which are in Russian. Although these schools are covered by the "computerisation of schools" programme, in general they are poorly equipped with computers and peripherals and such computers as they do have are generally not powerful enough to support Internet connections.

To compound the resource problem, the centres are delivering complete streams in minority languages of instruction. In one visited by the review team, a centre with an enrolment of 832 was conducting 18 class groups in Lithuanian, 15 classes in Russian and 3 in Polish. Inevitably this requires a great many teachers; for example, a teacher who teaches Mathematics in Polish may not be able to teach other subjects in the Polish stream, nor be able to teach Mathematics in other language streams.

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Literacy

Illiteracy is a hidden problem in Lithuania. Justly proud of their well educated population, Lithuanians find it difficult to admit that the problem exists. They are not, of course, alone in this: other countries are equally reluctant, and to be fair the problem in Lithuania is not huge. Basically, two "pockets" of illiteracy exist. The first is in Lithuania's Roma (gypsy) population. The problem surfaced as an unexpected result of work with gypsy children, whose parents admitted to being illiterate themselves. The second group is made up mostly of those Lithuanians who, as children, were among the families exiled in Siberia by the Soviet authorities.

Adult education centres are doing their best to deal with this issue and to provide some classes, but there appears to be a shortfall in specialist literacy teaching expertise especially for adults. There were no reliable figures available to the team on the size of the problem.

Adult Continuing Vocational Education

At the time of restoration of independence, Lithuania had inherited virtually no tradition of continuing vocational training and was not ready to meet the demands of the reorganisation of the workforce required by the shift to a market economy. Since then, Lithuania has focussed most of its attention on training for the unemployed.

In a survey taken in 1998, 40% of the Lithuanian population polled considered the main problem in Lithuania to be the creation of new workplaces. This was considered more important than integration into the European Union and crime.[6]

In 1998, the Lithuanian Association for Adult Education conducted research into continuing education in small and middle-sized companies. In interviews conducted with 100 managers and 400 employees, "continuing education" was described as "qualification improvement". Among employees, 63.3% indicated that they had no definite plans or prospects in continuing education and 44% of employers had little or no information about qualification improvement opportunities for their employees.

At Klaipeda University, a unit has been set up to service the needs of local industry in retraining its workers and improving their skills. The Economic co-operation Office spearheads a network of five universities in this endeavour, but to date the initiative has met with little enthusiasm from the enterprises it targets. The main problems appear to be a lack of tradition in enterprise worker training, low motivation on the part of employers in an employee-rich environment, lack of funds available for training and fears about enterprises' own survival.

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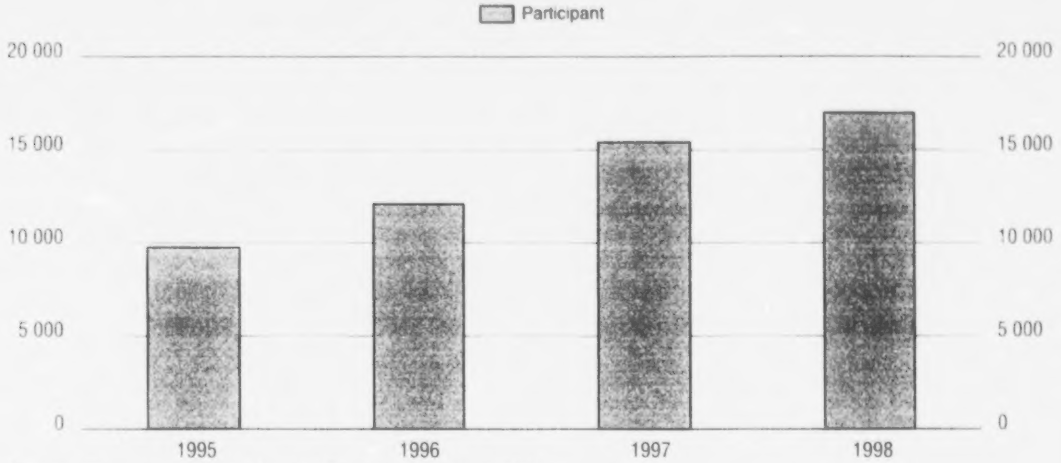
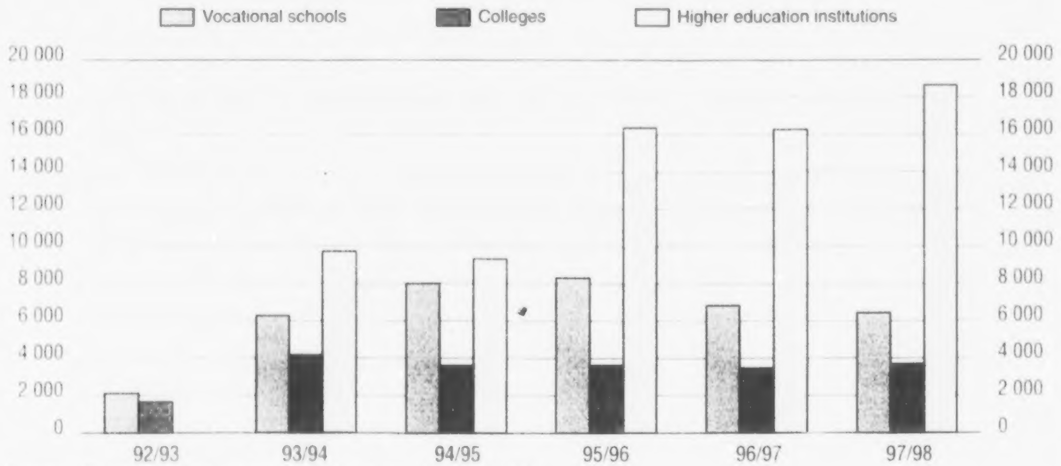
Figure 19*a*. **Numbers of participants in training and retraining courses in licensed training centres**



Source: Education, Department of Statistics, Vilnius, 1999.

The Department of Statistics collects data on participation rates in continuing vocational training from providers licensed by the MoES. However, these figures do not give the complete picture as they do not count participants in enterprise-based training or in courses run by providers registered by municipalities. Figures on participation rates for employed persons are particularly hard to find. The

Figure 19*b*. **Participation in training and retraining courses in vocational schools, colleges and other higher education institutions**



Source: Education, Department of Statistics, Vilnius, 1999.

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National Observatory indicates that in 1997 less than 10% of working-age people participated in such courses and that in the same year private employers financed only 8 training courses even though at that time the private sector employed more than 50% of all working people.[7]

Despite lack of employer enthusiasm and commitment to worker training and retraining, the number of participants in courses conducted at officially licensed training centres (some 86) is growing.[8] In 1998, 67% of the participants were aged 26 years and over 98% of the courses lasted six months or less and 54% lasting less than one month. (It should be noted that the maximum duration of labour market programmes for the unemployed is one year.)

In vocational schools, colleges and higher education institutions, the numbers of participants in training and retraining courses are increasing significantly at the higher education level, but steady or dropping at the vocational or college levels. This could be explained by the increasing role played by the labour market training centres and the vocational schools' general lack of competitiveness in the tendering process involved in the selection of providers for retraining courses.

Who pays for it?

A sociological survey carried out into adult training in 1997[9] revealed the following about who paid for continuing vocational courses:

Table 37. **Source of financing of continuing vocational courses, 1997**

	In per cent
State	51
Participant	29
Labour exchange	9
Private employers	8
Foreign partners of the company	1.1
Foundations, charities	1.7
Trade Unions	0

Source: "In-depth study on Continuing Vocational Training in Lithuania", 1997, p. 9.

These figures indicate an assumption on the part of industry that the state is still responsible for industry's retraining needs and that the state is currently accepting that responsibility. Lithuania needs to move on from this belief. When Lithuania's economy strengthens, it should consider the introduction of an industry/enterprise training levy. In the current economic situation, however, this action may be premature as compulsory general training levies usually work best in countries with well-developed private sectors and established tax systems.

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When the participation of the private sector in continuing vocational training eventually grows, the MoES (and other Ministries involved) need to shift the state's role from being a direct training provider to being the creator of the necessary conditions to allow a quality-controlled, co-ordinated and supported private and enterprise-based training system to thrive.

The provider battle

Currently, however, a system exists in which state-supported institutions are competing with each other to win work funded by the vocational training fund. In a number of vocational schools visited by the review team, serious resentment was expressed about the role taken by the Labour Market Training Centres. In one vocational school, a labour market centre was operating upstairs in the same building and running classes in the very same specialities of the vocational school below, duplicating the considerable teaching resources and equipment needed. Vocational schools feel cheated of the opportunity to earn extra revenue from continuing vocational classes for adults. In one school, this situation was described as "[the Labour Market Training Centres] stealing our bread". Although a tendering process exists to award this work, vocational schools and colleges are rarely successful in the bidding process and, rightly or wrongly, do not regard the competition as being played on a level playing field. This contest involving two ministries is unproductive and extremely wasteful of resources. When Lithuania is having difficulty funding one vocational system, it seems irresponsible to run two competing ones. The Ministries involved seem to take the view that such competition will make the vocational schools "lift their game". In reality it appears to be having the opposite effect. Vocational schools (at least those not selected as EC-Phare schools) are in the vicious circle of not being able to earn the extra-budgetary funds needed to update their equipment, materials and provide extra training for their staff and are therefore not well placed to compete against the LMTCs for training work.

Recommendations on adult education

- Continue efforts to change adult secondary schools into Adult Education Centres, with a corresponding shift to more flexible, adult-oriented teaching methodologies (*e.g.* modular curriculum). Centres should continue to broaden their function to provide both general and non-formal courses. Funding should be provided as early as possible for learning materials, textbooks and ICT equipment.
- Mount a publicity campaign to encourage enterprises to focus on the value of continuing professional training for their employees – and to pay for it.

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- Consider the establishment of a training levy on enterprises, with the aim of establishing a training culture and easing the state's financial burden for skills upgrading.
- Address the shortfall in specialist adult literacy teaching expertise. Accessing some of the open and distance learning courses in adult literacy pedagogy available world-wide could be a cost-effective solution.
- Take steps to ensure that the current tendering system for retraining work is fair and does not exclude vocational schools from success in the bidding process. Initially this may require some affirmative action on behalf of some vocational schools.
- Improve the quality and quantity of teaching materials, textbooks and equipment in adult education institutions in Lithuania. The teaching of adults requires different motivational and pedagogical approaches that are resource hungry: not only books (in Lithuanian) suitable for adult learners are needed, but also computers powerful enough to support Internet connections.

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Notes

1. Prof. Dr. Ana Krajnc, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. *Adult Education in relation to Decentralization and Democratization of Society*. Paper presented at Association of Estonian Adult Educators Seminar, *The Role and Organization of Adult Education in the Period of Transition*. Tallinn: November 1998.
2. From Article 1 of draft translation of Law on Adult Non-formal Education.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. M.A Tadas Tamosiunas, Vilnius Pedagogical University. "Situation of Continuing Education in Lithuania".. Paper presented at Association of Estonian Adult Educators Seminar, *The Role and Organization of Adult Education in the Period of Transition*. Tallinn: November 1998.
7. National Observatory: In-depth Study on Continuing Vocational Training, Lithuania. (1998) Vilnius: National Observatory, p. 3.
8. *Svietimas*/Education. (1999). Vilnius: Statistics Lithuania.
9. *Ibid.* p. 9.

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Chapter 6

Social Inclusion: Access, Equity and Special Needs

A – Access, Equity and Social Issues

Introduction

In a small and relatively homogeneous country like Lithuania, social exclusion and lack of access do not, at first glance, appear to be serious concerns in education. The issue of access to education is a complex one. In a simple way, it can be described by the number of students/pupils who attend (complete) schools of a given level of education, the participation of students/pupils from national minorities and special needs children, by the average distance from a student's home to the nearest school and expenses for education paid by students' families (fees). On the other hand, access can be described in terms of the barriers a student encounters on the way to being admitted to a particular school or school type.

In the 1998/99 school year, 97.7% of all primary school age children (age 7-10) and 94.4% of lower secondary school age children (age 11-15), were enrolled in school. This drops to 87.4% of the post-compulsory age group (16-18) and to 34.4% at tertiary education level, but it is still obvious that the large majority of young people in Lithuania receive at least 12 years of education and more than a third continue on into higher education.

The 1992 General Concept of Education in Lithuania contains some useful principles for the educational rights of marginal groups and minorities, such as the right to receive a general education based on their native culture, with certain subjects taught in their native language. It guarantees the right to learn Lithuanian to a level of fluency that allows them to continue their studies and the right of children of migrants and national minorities to reach school readiness through pre-school programmes that allow them to take a full part in school life.

Moreover, the figures show an acceptable gender balance at least through compulsory education, although thereafter more girls than boys remain in school (93.4% of girls versus 81.6% of boys age 16-18) and more girls than boys attend higher education (41.6% of girls versus 27.3% of boys age 19-24).[1] Even more encouraging is the trend: all 1998/99 figures are at least two percentage points

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higher than those of the previous year.[2] While this may reflect demography as much as demand for education, the impression is that more of Lithuania's young people are in school and more stay there for longer.

Access to early childhood education

One of the barriers to access may be the lack of early childhood and pre-school education. Generally, education research seems to indicate that early involvement in education improves children's achievements later on in their school career.

As described in Chapter 3, in 1998, whereas almost half the children (49.3% in 1998) of pre-school age attended urban pre-schools, the corresponding figure for the countryside was only 12.3%. Only 38% of children aged 1-6 years attended kindergartens, with substantial differences in participation rates between towns and rural areas.

The entrance age for primary education in Lithuania is 7, later than in most OECD countries where children tend to start at age 6. The differences in actual enrolment patterns between urban and rural areas are significant. In effect, village children often come to school with no prior preparation. Furthermore, many primary schools and basic schools outside towns operate as separate units. This can affect the quality of teaching in rural schools (shortage of specialised subject teachers) and build an additional obstacle (school threshold) for students who would like to continue education in upper secondary school. For students of town schools, it is a "natural" process of passing form grade 8 to 9 within the same institution. For village children it means not only a change of school, but often a need to move or to travel every day to the town where a suitable secondary school is located.

It is clear that Lithuania faces a major challenge in early childhood education. The MoES, in collaboration with the Ministries of Finance, Health and Social Security and Labour and the association of municipal governments, is placing a high priority on this issue, but the reforms are still developing. The focus is on creating the social conditions for learning. The priority is to increase the participation of children in pre-school at age 3 and the number of children prepared to enter school at age 6.

As described in Chapter 2, support for pre-schools in the national budget has increased 124% since 1995 (unadjusted for inflation) and from 2.9% to 4.4% of the national budget expenditures – a rate of increase greater than other education sectors.

Major challenges include the significant disparities between rural and urban areas, the lack of institutions to provide pre-school education and differences in the fiscal capacity of municipalities to support pre-schools. The municipalities are principally the level of government responsible for financing pre-schools and

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therefore the disparities in the fiscal capacity among municipalities can seriously affect equal provision of pre-school across the country. Lithuania is addressing these issues in the context of broader reform efforts aimed at creating the social conditions for learning: addressing issues of equal opportunity, modernising the education process, providing material support to rural schools and optimising the school network.

For example, from 40% to 50% of rural schools are under-utilised. As described in Chapter 3, efforts are being made to introduce pre-school classes into kindergartens and "zero" classes in compulsory education. While making use of under-utilised capacity may be an alternative in rural areas, it is not an alternative for urban centres where there is a problem of over-crowding. The development of ways to make better use of under-utilised school facilities will, of course, not solve all the problems of the preparation of village children to enter school.

The OECD team commends Lithuania for the priority being given to early childhood education. However, because of its importance for access and equity in the Republic, the OECD recommends that Lithuania elevate early childhood education to an even higher priority. In particular, Lithuania should intensify its commitment to increasing the participation of children in pre-school at age 3 and the number of children prepared to enter school at age 6. The team is also concerned about the need for careful consideration of the impact of optimisation on pre-school education in rural areas.

Drop-out and non-attendance

There are, however, concerns about an increase in non-attendance during the years of compulsory schooling, grades 1-10. While the numbers are not high, there are still children (5 171 in 1998) who do not attend primary school and youngsters who do not attend compulsory lower secondary school (16 219 in 1998). A small proportion of these will be children with severe disabilities, but others have left school prematurely, many as a result of socio-economic or family conditions. Concerns also exist about those who leave education after age 16, many of them without adequate preparation for employment. The review team heard about a noticeable increase in youth unemployment, poverty and delinquency. The crime rate among juveniles is growing faster than the overall crime rate and nearly half of all criminal offenders are between the ages of 14 and 24. In response, a Programme for the Prevention of Crime among Children and Teenagers was approved in March 1997. "Youth schools" for youngsters with motivation and learning problems have been established, covering grades 7-10 and offering more individualised and practical education to at-risk teenagers and encouraging them to return to mainstream vocational or academic education.

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In addition to non-attendance, dropout and low motivation among some school-age youngsters, there are groups that are marginalised for other reasons. Among them are Roma (gypsy) children, street children and children from very poor or dysfunctional families for whom regular school attendance is an almost daily struggle. Therefore, while the Lithuanian school system admirably serves the needs of the overwhelming majority, it does not serve some vulnerable minorities in equal measure.

Poverty

The system of family support that existed in communist countries before the transition was an achievement recognised in the West as promoting child and maternal health and child development. While the retreat of the state is welcome in many areas of life, basic services essential to the well being of families and children have suffered in terms of coverage, efficient delivery and equitable distribution. The impact of rising unemployment, the fall in real wages and the loss of social safety nets have meant that more children now live in poverty than did so before the transition began. Indeed, children as a group are more likely to live in poverty than other vulnerable groups, such as the elderly.[3] Lithuania has suffered less than some other transition countries, for example in those (around one-third of the 27 countries in transition since 1989) where war and armed conflict have made the world even more perilous for children. A 1998 study showed that the main causes of poverty in Lithuania are the same as those prevailing across Europe: the most poverty-stricken were persons with a low educational level and households with unemployed members, three or more children, several generations living together and single-parent families. The highest poverty level was found in rural areas; the lowest in the large cities.

Measuring levels of poverty is not clear-cut. It depends on the definition of poverty used and on the availability of reliable statistics. A study based on a poverty threshold of USD 4 per day concluded that, in 1993/94, about 120 million people (approx. 30% of the 414 million living in CEE/CIS/Baltic countries) lived in poverty in the region, compared with 13.6 million in 1988/89. Half the population of Lithuania was classified as poor by this standard.[4] Although unemployment now hits men harder than women[5] (*e.g.* 13.8% male unemployment and 11.4% female unemployment in Lithuania in 1998),[6] more single-parent families are headed by women. Children are therefore disproportionately affected by poverty and by social dislocation such as divorce and family breakdown.

Another measure of child welfare is the number of high-risk children placed in public institutional care. The system of public care prevailing in communist countries at the end of the 1980s relied on outdated practices, notably the total removal of children from their families and placement in large institutions. The excessive reliance on institutional care rather than fostering or adoption is now

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Table 38. **Care institutions for children, 1998**

	Type of institution	Number (Institutions)	No. of children	Orphans/ homeless	No. of places
1	Infants' home	6	517	412	530
2	State care homes for children	28	2 735	1 970	2 937
3	General boarding schools	11	2 009	569	2 110
4	Special boarding schools	47	5 283	849	6 385
5	Boarding schools for disabled children	5	767	394	900
6	Public organisations' care homes for children	14	291	276	387
7	Parish care homes for children	3	91	27	88
8	Municipal care homes for children	66	2 707	838	2 778
9	Temporary care homes for children	15	243	241	308
10	Day centres	31	787	24	869
11	Residential care homes for children with special needs	4	261	113	365
12	Family (foster) care homes for children	39	320	282	
13	Private institutions	1	8	8	
14	Foster Families	5 323	7 040	7 040	
	Total	239	15 232	13 043	17 657

Source: Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Social Report 1998, p. 176.

being reversed. The legal framework for children's rights protection is now much stronger; in 1998, the *Seimas* passed the Law on Child Guardianship and foster care for abandoned children was declared a top priority.

Again, the position of Lithuanian children compares well with that in Latvia and Estonia, but still, the number of orphans/abandoned children 0-3 placed in infant homes rose by nearly 30% between 1997 and 1998 (319 to 412).[7] (In the worst case, Estonia, the rate of institutionalisation had risen 80% by 1995 and 120% by 1997; in Latvia the rise was 80% between 1989 and 1997.) In Lithuania, fortunately, there is enough capacity in the system to provide care for children in need of shelter and from the review team's observations, the standard of care is high.

Nevertheless, the growing vulnerability of families must cause concern. Municipalities, for example, are responsible for most (73%) of social security funding, with the state carrying 26% and employers less than 1%. Each municipality's economic situation and population structure by age greatly affect its sources of income and thereby its ability to provide support for needy families. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour is doing much to protect and equalise citizens' Constitutional rights to social security and social assistance and to support an adequate minimum subsistence level (MSL). However, it admits that of greatest concern are "at risk" children: street children, homeless children, those from families in conflict, orphans and young people who because of inadequate schooling or lack of ability, have difficulty in adapting to the changing economy and social conditions.[8]

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Roma (Gypsy) children

The Roma population in Lithuania is not large; it is estimated at around 5 000 nationally, with small communities in cities as well as in rural areas. Few Roma children, however, attend school regularly. A survey conducted in 1997 showed that only 276 Roma children were enrolled in primary and basic schools: 55 in Vilnius, 46 in Kaunas, 33 in Siauliai, 20 in the Panevezys region and a few in other cities and small towns.

Dropout levels are high (estimated at about 125 between 1993-98). Reasons given included an intolerant atmosphere at school; difference in age compared with other pupils in the same class – Roma children usually start school much later than the normal entrance age of 6 or 7. Failure to cope with studies due to language difficulties, unfavourable conditions at home, for example lack of help with homework, obligations to help with housework or child care; early marriage; and frequent family moves from one place to another were also cited as causes for dropouts.

In 1997, the Open Society Fund-Lithuania began some programmes aimed at better communication with Roma families and better integration in the community and the schools. Seminars for teachers and pupils were organised, introducing active learning methods and cultural activities of interest to the Roma community. Starting in 1997/98, 57 teachers and 115 pupils from around the country took part in the programme; by 1998/99, these numbers had doubled and 42 Lithuanian, Russian and Polish-speaking primary and secondary schools from 12 municipalities. Teachers are mentoring Roma students at school and also mediate between the school and the children's home communities. More opportunities for cultural self-expression and social integration, as well as summer camps for children, a community advice centre and oral history projects recording the experiences of Lithuanian Roma people during World War II and the Soviet period, are now creating a more tolerant environment even in small communities where Roma children often felt excluded.

Clearly, small-scale community-based projects such as these can make a great difference in the lives of families and individual children. The review team strongly supports these efforts; more, however, could be done. Since social adaptation and language difficulties are among the main reasons for non-attendance and early drop-out among Roma children, it would seem important to devise outreach programmes that provide early childhood and child-oriented education opportunities along with culturally sensitive community services. Since the Roma community in Lithuania is not large and since many schools appear to have enough space and staff, this would be neither expensive nor difficult.

The real break-through will come when some Roma youngsters remain in school long enough to obtain secondary and tertiary education; some of them

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might even become teachers themselves, thereby breaking the vicious cycle of lack of education, few positive role models, low expectations, poverty and social exclusion.

Street children

According to data of the Children's Rights Protection Service at the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, a growing number of "problem families" is registered each year; in 1998, the number of such families exceeded 15 000, with more than 34 000 children. Also in 1998, "children without parental care" (including orphans and "abandoned" or homeless children) accounted for about 2% of the total number of children under 18 years of age, or approximately 18 000 youngsters.[9]

Although the media and public opinion may exaggerate the issue to some extent, there is no doubt that an increasing number of youngsters live outside their families' or communities' care and control, especially in cities. In Vilnius, the police estimate the number of children-in-the-street at between 200 and 300, although only about 20 or 30 of them are "street children" in the stricter sense of being homeless and sleeping rough.[10] This distinction between "children-in-the-street" and "street children" is significant, because the former still maintain links with their families and often continue to attend school even if they spend most of their daytime hours away from home. The latter group, however, are more likely to have severed their connections with family and school, are more likely to be in trouble with the police and more at risk of being involved in violence and crime, either as victims or participants.

The problem of runaways and minors living without parental supervision is growing in many countries, especially in large cities like London, Moscow and Naples; it is therefore no surprise that the social turbulence of the transition has created a similar situation in post-communist countries. An international seminar on "Street Children/Children-in-the-Streets" was held in Vilnius in December 1999, with participation from the Baltic States as well as Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, FYRoM, Romania and Slovakia. While each country reported a slightly different situation, many issues are common: the lack of reliable data; the lack of a clear definition of "street children"; the consequences for children of living in the street – in terms of poor education, social exclusion and risks of illness, crime and abuse.

In Lithuania, for example, the lack of statistical information is attributed to the lack of any clear definition of the target population and inappropriate statistical methods. Statistics on "street children" are then drawn by inference from the numbers of children who do not attend school – confusing the issue of truancy with the issue of street children.[11] However, some common features do emerge from the data that are known. The majority of street children are boys; most are between 14 and 17 years old, although there are also growing numbers of younger children, some under 10 years old. They tend to be attracted to city life, partly because there are more places to hide from adult eyes and more opportunities to obtain money and food. Some children are from displaced, refugee or gypsy families, without social ties to the local community. Some are from linguistic minorities for whom regular schooling, employment and community acceptance are problematic. Many are found near railway or bus stations, markets and shopping centres where small-scale buying and selling, begging and stealing are easier. All these children are at constant risk: of trouble with the police, of alcohol and drug abuse, of physical abuse and sexual exploitation. All these children are under-educated and in danger of being permanent "outsiders" without access to regular employment or a future in mainstream society.

The reasons why children take to the streets are several, but there are a number of common factors. First, there are social and economic causes such as poverty, unemployment, poor housing, displacement, lack of basic social and welfare assistance and the "attractions" and relative anonymity of modern city life. Second, there are family factors: conflict, divorce, alcohol and drug abuse and the necessity for both parents to work long hours in order to survive. Third, there are factors related to school: the pressures of school work, expectations of teachers and parents and lack of success that lead to low motivation in students and a sense of frustration and failure. Moreover, many at-risk children have been in state care or have run away from care institutions, sometimes after experiencing abuse or neglect that make them mistrust adults and adult institutions – including schools.

What is to be done?

About 15 organisations in Lithuania are now actively working with street children. Municipalities, churches and the Ministry of Education provide some, but insufficient, funding for their activities. Co-ordination has been a problem; a recently opened Resource Centre, housed in the Children's Support Centre in Vilnius, now has a country co-ordinator and the beginnings of a database related to street children as well as a place where training seminars and meetings can be held. Among the most active organisations are Save the Children and a small number of church-related voluntary groups in Vilnius, a Day Centre in Kaunas and a foundation in Klaipeda.

These organisations can, however, deal only with the consequences, not the causes of social disaffection among young people. What is needed is a better social safety net for families under stress; better co-ordination among services available for them; and better understanding among the public, the press and law enforcement authorities. Few children find themselves on the streets by choice, or through faults of their own. Repressive or intolerant responses to their presence on the streets are not helpful: "blaming the victim" provides no basis for prevention

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and support. When street children end up in police custody or in prison, the streets may be tidier but the children will be further alienated from society and less likely to have a steady job or form a stable family in adult life. A more humane and preventive approach is needed.

At the same time, there is no need to romanticise or "sentimentalise" the often very harsh lives of children in the streets. Some organisations adopt names that veer dangerously in that direction – for example, "Children of the Wind" (referring to small-scale petty thievery, *e.g.* in markets) and "White Crows" (roughly equivalent to "black sheep" in English). It is rarely a good thing for a child to be at the margins of society: making a virtue of it, if only by implication, appears unwise.

Youth schools and ward homes

The education system in Lithuania provides Youth Schools (*Jaunimo mokyklos*) for youngsters aged 14-18 (roughly grades 7-10) described as having "low motivation to learn". There are 23 of such schools throughout Lithuania (two of them in Vilnius), funded from municipal budgets, sometimes with NGO or international (often Danish) support. Each Youth School has its own character, but essentially all are second-chance institutions for students who find it difficult to fit into regular schools for a variety of reasons: lack of school success, problems at home, neglect or abuse in the family, or trouble with the police, sometimes related to alcohol or drug abuse (30% of new arrivals), petty theft or more serious offences like armed robbery. Most students are of normal intelligence and many are "streetwise", but they tend to have few social skills and low self-esteem.

One Youth School visited by the review team saw its purpose as 1) responding to young people in crisis, 2) helping them cope with the general curriculum for secondary schooling, plus providing practical skills (radio technology, ceramics, cooking) to make them employable; 3) providing a secure environment that builds confidence and self-respect. The majority of this Youth School's 60 students intend to return to grade 11 in upper secondary school, or to vocational schools; four are orphans, living with a grandparent or relative; 14 are from single-parent families; 13 are from large families. There are 33 staff in total, including three full-time and one part-time vocational education teachers. The extension of compulsory schooling to 10 years has had a negative effect on this school's ability to accept new entrants; only 16 could be accepted in 1999 (half the normal number) because 9th graders were staying on another year and facilities are already overcrowded.

There is little or no contact with the mainstream school system, partly because of a perception that schools are "glad to have problem kids off their hands" and not keen to welcome them back. However, the review team believes that Youth Schools could be a source of valuable experience and advice in drop-out

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prevention programmes, especially in high-risk urban areas; early-warning and prevention measures are better than cure.

Ward homes

Crime rates in the CEE/CIS/Baltic States were historically low. But the lifting of social and political controls, along with a deteriorating economic situation, have led to a rapid increase in criminal activity. The growth in juvenile crime is related to the same factors, as well as to the inadequate support for adolescents at the important juncture between school and work and to family pressures. Violent crimes, even murders, committed by juveniles showed an alarming rise; on average one in every 4 000 males in Russia and Lithuania were convicted of murder in 1995.[12] The risk of children becoming the victims of crime rose also, although data are not collected systematically and registered cases represent only part of the problem.

Until 1994, closed institutions were the only options for youngsters in serious trouble with the law in Lithuania. In recent years, a few "ward homes for special care and education" have provided a limited alternative for troubled 12-18 year olds. One providing care for 103 delinquent girls is located in Vilnius; it used to be a girls' colony under the Ministry of the Interior, but in 1969 was transferred to the Ministry of Education; it remained essentially a correctional institution until 1989, becoming primarily an educational institution for girls "in crisis" only in 1994.

Girls can be referred by the courts or the police, by mainstream or Youth Schools, or be self-referred: "Some turn up here because they have simply nowhere else to go." Their average stay is about one or two months, but it can be as long as four years. Officially, stays are limited to two years, but many (17 girls in 1998) have nowhere to return to and stay longer. "Many parents are not interested; sometimes girls stay with us for years and the parents never get in touch." About 20 of the girls, however, still live with their families and only attend during the day. Drop-out problems are rare; the girls know that they risk prison if they break the rules and most regard the home as a safe place.

This ward home is the only one for girls in Lithuania. It is funded directly by the Ministry of Education and is considered an educational (not a correctional) institution. There are discussions whether the school should be part of the judiciary system, but teachers are reluctant to turn the school "back into a penal colony". The staff consists of 28 pedagogical staff, six of them part-time; they have no special training in social work or dealing with juvenile delinquents. Money is tight; the building is owned by the MoES but there is no money for renovation; there is some money for meals, heating and books, some help from NGOs to buy clothes and medical and dental services are provided "only reluctantly" by the municipality.

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A judge in court can order that a girl be taken into care for a specific period, with the agreement of the parents, the Agency for Children's Rights, the Director of the ward home and final approval from the Ministry of Education. During this time, girls follow the regular curriculum, although many are far behind their age group, some 15-16 year olds are still doing grade 5 work. Basic skills, social adjustment and elementary practical skills (*e.g.* in sewing) are a priority, although some girls do find their way back into mainstream schools.

Recommendations related to access, equity and social issues

- Elevate early childhood education to an even higher priority because of its importance for access and equity in the Republic. In particular, Lithuania should intensify its commitment to increasing the participation of children in pre-school at age 3 and the number of children prepared to enter school at age 6. The team is also concerned about the need for careful consideration of the impact of optimisation on pre-school education in rural areas.
- Target social support on at-risk children and families. The Lithuanian Constitution, laws and policy are clear that every child – Lithuanian as well as minority – is entitled to an education of equal quality, in a school environment that is free of religious, gender or cultural bias. Lithuania is also a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Society thus generally accepts that the promotion of children's rights is good for children and also for society as a whole. Many of the factors that are known to put children at risk, however – such as family poverty, poor housing and family breakdown – need better, co-ordinated help, targeted specifically on support for children.
- Use schools as "early warning systems" for children in trouble. Teachers are often the first to notice signs like playground bullying, truancy, poor school performance, or lack of attention in class. Whole-school workshops and in-service training for teachers on drop-out prevention and community relations could make a difference: prevention is better than cure.
- Reduce unnecessary pressure on children to "succeed" academically. While all schools and teachers rejoice in excellence and like to praise star performers, this can lead to a judgmental atmosphere that discourages average and slow learners. Academic failure is one of the reasons for leaving school most frequently quoted by drop-outs and street children.
- Provide training for teachers interested in working with troubled youngsters, *e.g.* in ward homes or Youth Schools. Universities have only recently (1999) begun to graduate qualified social workers; they are still a rare commodity, but they could be valuable in providing special services *e.g.* to the

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recently established Children's Helpline, outreach programmes with street children and training for teachers, NGOs and community volunteers.

- Improve the quality and quantity of teaching materials, textbooks and equipment in adult education institutions in Lithuania. The teaching of adults requires different motivational and pedagogical approaches that are resource hungry: not only books (in Lithuanian) suitable for adult learners are needed, but also computers powerful enough to support Internet connections.

B – Special Needs Provision in Lithuania

Introduction

It is said that any society's values can be judged by the way in which it treats its most vulnerable members. If this is so, then Lithuania's social values – as reflected in public policy as well as day-to-day social discourse – are commendable. In its many discussions with specialists, care providers and teachers and in meeting young people with a range of special needs, the team found many examples of dedicated care and purposeful learning. The new Law on Special Education (*Specialiojo Ugdymo Istatymas*), which came into effect on 1 September 1999, marks another milestone on the road towards full integration of persons with special needs into Lithuanian society.

Legal framework

The Education Law (Art. 4 and 12), the Social Integration Law of 1991 and the new Special Education Law of 1999 form the basis for special needs education in Lithuania. In addition, a number of concepts were set out for the National Rehabilitation Programme for the Disabled 2002-2007; and in 1998, the Ministry for Social Security and Labour published its Concept of Disability and its first action plan which focuses on disabled children under 16. Social policy in disability issues is now well developed.

In a change from past practices, the aim now is that all children with special needs will receive education suitable to their condition,[13] as much as possible in regular classes or in special classes within regular schools. While the new law does not require "mainstreaming", it is one of the principles laid down in the law and – in the view of Section 1, § 4.6 – a desirable outcome. Indeed the policy in Lithuania is to integrate special needs children as much as possible into ordinary school and community life. Children with severe or multiple handicaps are still placed in special schools, but the number of such placements is declining, from 11 000 in 1989 to 7 440 in 1995/96 and 7 156 at the start of the 1998/99 school year. Children who are unable to attend educational institutions are educated at home.

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The principles of special education in Lithuania are 1) opportunities and conditions equal to those provided to other members of the community; 2) integration and equal participation in community life; 3) decentralisation, with participation of the family and local authorities; 4) universality – education of all persons with special needs; 5) all-inclusive, continuing and life-long education; 6) supportive and flexible collaboration with mainstream and special schools to provide continuity in learning; and 7) functional education aimed at building each individual's self-reliance and ability to live in the community.[14] The new law goes further than the 1992 General Concept, which states that "Children with mild physical handicaps or learning disabilities are taught along with healthy children and receive additional necessary assistance. Children with severe physical and mental handicaps who are unable to attend general schools are taught in special schools [but only if] corrective help provided... does not achieve expected results" (General Concept, Sections 3.2-3.3).

Persons with special educational needs are defined in the law as "children and adults who, because of innate or acquired disorders, have limited possibilities to participate in the educational process and the life of society". [Section 1.3(3)]. Special educational needs that arise from these disorders can be met either in mainstream schools, in special classes within mainstream schools, in special schools or institutions, or at home. Combinations of these – "partial integration" in mainstream schools or classes, with support for the person's special needs – as well as modified, adapted, special or individual educational programmes, pedagogical and rehabilitation services and support in the community are all made possible under the new law. In essence, the law makes it clear that each individual's needs should be met in the least restrictive environment possible, in consultation with state or municipal pedagogical-psychological services, parents or guardians and each educational institution's commission for special education.

The rights of special-needs persons, as set out in the law, include the right to be educated; the right to choose (with parents' consent) the form and place of education that best suits their circumstances; to receive the financial, material and other assistance they need; to receive special services (*e.g.* from sign-language interpreters, guides, readers) and technical equipment, both in the institution and at home; and, for students with severe disabilities, to be educated up to the age of 21 in special groups in mainstream schools, special schools, or other educational institutions. Parents have the legal right to participate in decisions and processes regarding their child's education, to be fully informed and make suggestions to their child's teachers and carers.[15]

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Placement and provision

This strong legal framework, with its emphasis on providing access and educational opportunities for all members of society, is in line with Lithuania's open, inclusive approach to education and sets it apart from practices in many other former socialist countries where the Soviet science of "defectology" still deeply affects the thinking about children with special needs, focusing on diagnosing and correcting the "defect", rather than respecting the educational needs of the child as an individual. Previously, policy on special needs education in the region emphasised the role of the state: institutional care rather than family-based support, little attention to other than medically diagnosed needs and care in large, closed or semi-closed institutions such as orphanages or special boarding schools rather than in the community.

Diagnostics

Despite the fall in Lithuania's overall birth rate, the number of children diagnosed as having disabilities has increased sharply since 1991. This is largely due to better and earlier diagnoses, although a decline in maternal and child health is likely to be a contributing factor. At the end of 1996, there were 11 341 disabled children in the country, 65% more than in 1991, approximately half of them maintained by the state or municipality. Nutritional disorders, skin and muscular disorders, developmental defects and mental handicaps increased most rapidly.[16]

The number of children in infant homes in Lithuania has also been rising, from 216.2 per 100 000 population in 1991 to 254.4 in 1995 and 312.6 in 1997.[17]

Up to 1991, there were state Psychological, Medical and Pedagogical Commissions (PMPKs), replaced (1991/1993) by a state Service for Diagnostics and Evaluation with one Centre and eight branches around the country. Since 1993, services have been provided by teams of specialists at municipal level: the "Pedagogical-Psychological Service" has 24 centres all over Lithuania, set up with Danish support across all 56 municipalities. There are also nine centres at county level (covering the 10 counties) that work together to produce methodological materials and

Table 39 **Change in number of disabled children under 15, 1991/1996**

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
First diagnosed as disabled	1 534	1 641	1 570	1 984	1 962	2 025
Total disabled children under 15, end of year	6 875	8 154	9 191	10 278	10 710	11 341

Source: Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Social Report 1997, Table 6.3-5, p. 91

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support to teachers in schools. The function of the Special Education Division of the General Education Department within the MoES is two-fold: supervision and adaptation of content and curricula for special needs. Children identified with special needs are, as much as possible, placed in regular schools but are given individual educational programmes (IEPs) with the help of Pedagogical/Psychological Committees. Schools also work with nearby rehabilitation centres for sick or convalescent children and send teachers to help those who are educated at home.

According to the Ministry of Education, approximately 6.6% of pupils in mainstream schools age 7 through class 10 have special needs.[18] Of these, 6.3% (5 911 children) are integrated in regular schools; 0.3% (312 children) are in special classes within regular schools. In addition, nine new schools have been started by parents; these are called "educational centres" and enrol a total of about 500 children. Very few children (485 in October 1998) are so severely handicapped that they receive no education at all; the ministry and municipalities are making efforts to reduce this number still further, in accordance with the new Special Education law which requires that all children should have access to educational services.

In 1999, only 20-25% of special needs children were not in mainstream schools, but attended special schools or institutions. In 1991, there were many more; integration into general secondary schools has increased by 50% since independence.

Table 40. **Special schools for mentally and physically disabled children**

Type of school	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Mentally handicapped (auxiliary) children	4 790	4 640	4 817	4 698
Blind and visually impaired children	267	294	324	333
Deaf and hearing-impaired children	378	424	456	476
Children with speech impairment	281	348	308	277
Children with muscular or locomotive problems	311	324	333	127
Children with social or behavioural problems	202	206	287	239
Auxiliary and compensatory classes in daytime general education schools (or residential homes)	1 211	1 210	1 040	1 006
Total	7 440	7 446	7 565	7 156

Source: Statistics Lithuania. Svietimas/Education 1999. Vilnius: Govt. of Lithuania, p. 66.

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Starting from 1993, special pedagogical help (*e.g.* speech therapy, help for visually impaired children) is given to 89% of special-needs children in mainstream schools.

The policy of the MoES is to achieve full integration of special needs children by the year 2002. An allocation of LTL 30 million has been made for this purpose; this money is available in the form of grants, mainly to NGOs who then work with municipalities on special needs issues. An example of such work is the organisation "Viltis" (*Lietuvos sutrikusio intelekto zmoniu globos bendrija*), an NGO with 47 branches involving 4 800 carers who look after approximately 4 000 people with mental and complex disabilities (*e.g.* Downs Syndrome). "Viltis" organises pre-schools, special and mainstream classes and training centres for independent living skills and collaborates with other national and international organisations, including the pioneering Child Development Centre established by the Ministry of Health in 1991. Located in Vilnius, the CDC runs the first Early Intervention Centre (social pediatrics and early rehabilitation) in Lithuania for pre-school children and their parents from all over the country.

A school in Utena visited by the review team had 66 children (out of 708) with identified special needs, many with speech difficulties for whom the school had hired a logopedic teacher. The team was told that there were also physically and mentally handicapped children in the school, some from social care institutions: "Previously, these children would have been in institutions, but now we try to include them in everything." Some initial opposition from parents and teachers has

Table 41. **Social provision in Utena: an example**

Social Care Division established in 1995	Special Education Division established in 1997
Based on the Declaration of Children's Rights, and serving children from birth to 18	Serving children and young people with disabilities, between 10-21 years old
October 1999 – 35 children "in crisis" around the clock. Average stay is short, but can be "years"	October 1999 – 25 children, from 7 am-4:30 pm on weekdays
Aims: Protection. Of the *entering* population, 44% have alcohol problems, 26% have unstable parents, 21% live in poverty, 9% have teenage/parent problems. When they leave, 42% return to their biological parents; 28% go to institutions; 18% go into foster care. Those over 18 are independent	*Aims:* Education, according to each child's individual educational programme (IEP). Integration into society, independent living; medical/social support. 83% have psychological problems, and 17% physical disabilities. Of the 83%, 47% have intellectual disabilities – 11% slight, 3% severe, 35% medium. Some children have multiple problems.

The Centre has 37 posts filled by 41 employees (this includes all professional and support staff). They co-operate with other institutions, *e.g.* the police and social workers. Main support is from international donors (World Bank and Swedish International Development Agency). Main aim is "to prevent institutionalisation", and integration into mainstream schools. Continuity in treatment is a problem. There is more demand than places at the Centre: old-fashioned "polyclinics" exist, but are no longer considered satisfactory. "Social attitudes are changing, teachers and parents see that integration is good for all types of kids."

Source: Team interview, 20 October 1999.

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now evaporated, although some problems remain with physical (*e.g.* wheelchair) access to some school facilities.

A Social Centre in the same community focuses not only on educational but also on social needs of children from unstable families. The Social Centre has two divisions, Social Care and Special Education; it was established with USD 500 000 in grants from international donors.

Issues in special needs education

Care in the community

Lithuania, like other post-communist countries, has inherited from the Soviet system a highly centralised, "medicalised" approach to services for all groups of troubled children and adolescents – mentally disabled, socially or emotionally deprived, psychiatrically or psycho-socially disturbed. Few alternatives existed to large institutions; children were placed in orphanages or closed "correctional" institutions, or in units for children within adult psychiatric hospitals. When in 1991-92 society became more sensitive to the needs of mentally disabled children in institutions, the Vilnius Child Development Centre started its work in seeking to involve parents and families and minimising the use of drug treatment. New approaches towards social welfare and the empowerment of families (which had for years been stigmatised and blamed for having exceptional children) are now having an impact not only on the treatment of children with special needs, but on social attitudes toward troubled youngsters.[19]

Although remarkable strides have been made since 1991, not all children and families are reached by the emerging community social welfare services. Many families face economic, psychological and social difficulties; the rise in suicides, juvenile delinquency, violence towards and by children, alcohol and drug abuse reflect a dark side of Lithuania's transition towards democracy and a market economy. More children are at risk; and the previous, "medical" approach needs to be replaced by a broader view which accepts that children's disabilities and social disorders require professional teamwork and community involvement. At the same time, experience in other countries has shown that the ideal of care in the community easily slides into "neglect in the community", especially where support services are fragile and under-resourced.

In Lithuania, the challenge now is to strike a balance between the human and educational rights of special needs children and the realities of family life. In Latvia, for example, concerns that families in rural or deprived areas would find it very difficult to look after the medical needs of disabled youngsters at home have led to a "go slow" policy to integration, in order to allow time for adequate support networks to be established. Lithuania's commitment to more rapid integration is

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to be commended, but needs to be complemented by services at municipal level to prevent a deterioration in practical support to families.

Educational programmes

Although schools receive help with the construction of Individual Educational Programmes (IEPs), not all teachers consider themselves sufficiently trained to deal with a variety of disabilities among their pupils. Pre-service teacher training now includes some work on special needs, but the quality of these courses varies. The Centre for Professional Development of Teachers under the MoES, in collaboration with the Regional Education Centres (RECs), provides in-service teacher training, especially for teachers at the grade 4/5 interface where children move from being taught by a single generalist teacher to having a number of specialist ones. More attention will need to be given to the special-needs training of all teachers, not only those specialising in certain aspects like *logopedics*.

A second concern is the narrow range of special services in schools. In one school visited by the team, all children with special needs were categorised as having "logopedic" (speech) problems; conveniently, the school happened to have a full-time *logopedics* specialist on its staff, but no other special needs specialists. The question then arises whether children's needs are matched to staff expertise available, rather than the other way around. It is difficult to accept that, in that particular school, speech problems were the only type of special needs among the student population.

Mis- and under-diagnosis of special needs are a further concern. Common learning disabilities like dyslexia or attention deficit disorder, or affective or psychological disorders such as "non-organic failure to thrive" and others covered in international classifications such as those used by the World Health Organisation, still receive little attention. In this respect, the work done by the Child Development Centre in Vilnius – in particular the early-intervention programme, social pediatrics and the programmes of child and adolescent psychiatry – is breaking new ground. It is hoped that this work will find its way into pre- and in-service training programmes for teachers, as well as into the policy discourse on special needs in the ministry.

Facilities

There is no doubt about the commitment of state and municipal authorities to integration of all children into high-quality education best suited to each child's needs. However, the practical ability of schools to provide suitable facilities is still very limited, especially where buildings are old or in poor repair and no additional funding is available to convert them to a standard suitable for disabled children. At the same time, the team did see some newly-built, spacious and attractive schools

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where architects had made no attempt to ensure wheelchair access to classrooms or toilets, widen doors, lower thresholds, or provide alternatives to stairs. Specifications for school rehabilitation or building projects should explicitly require that such elementary needs are met.

Financing and co-ordination

Fragmentation of responsibilities among several Ministries (*e.g.* Social Security and Labour, Health and Education) does not encourage co-ordination and competent supervision of effort, information sharing and financial efficiency.

Lithuania spends a considerable amount on family benefits and social protection. The part of GDP devoted to all types of social protection rose from 13% in 1995 to 15.5% in 1999 and is set to rise to 16.4% in 2001, before it is expected to decline steadily again to 13% by 2015.[20] However, most of these benefits are, by law, payable from municipal budgets. Some municipalities are either unable to meet these requirements, or benefits are not paid in time. Moreover, different benefits are paid by different agencies, even when they all depend on a single form of means-testing (the Declaration of Family Income and Property). A common system for the administration of social benefits (as reflected in the new Family Code) is part of the government's programme for 1997-2000,[21] it should result in improved transparency, efficiency and distribution to those in need.

The care of children with special needs at home rather than in institutions should represent substantial savings. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour estimated in 1997 that the custody of one child in a public institution cost more than four times as much as raising the child at home and more than twice as much as raising the child in family-type care homes or foster homes.[22]

At the same time, resources should be targeted for maximum benefit to children. The team was told, for example, that funding for the Child Development Centre in Vilnius had been substantially cut because, under new health insurance rules of the Ministry of Health, only "medical" costs can be funded. Since many children in the CDC's programmes have severe difficulties that are not strictly "medical" – *e.g.* psychiatric and social adjustment problems – there is a risk that they will not receive the care they need. It will be important to scrutinise all new rules or legislation carefully to ensure that they will not have adverse effects of this kind.

Recommendations related to special needs

- Ensure that state/municipal legislation and policies are family and child-friendly, both in intention and effect. The years of transition have brought a decline in regular state support for families. Some child-related benefits and services that used to be linked to the workplace are no longer available. As the

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state retreats from daily life, new social networks and the emergence of a non-government civil society will need to fill the gap. While this is a healthy development, some aspects of the inheritance of the past are worth building upon. For example, it will pay to maintain levels of health care and education for women, as these are prime determinants of children's welfare. Similarly, policies that enable parents to care for children at home by balancing work and child-care obligations will benefit the mental and physical health of children.

- Maintain commitment to the full integration of youngsters with disabilities in ordinary school and community life. Continue to "de-medicalise" the approach to disability; improve teacher preparation and in-service training; and fit provision to the actual needs of children – rather than categorising them for the convenience of the school, or the availability of specialised staff.
- Pay attention to common learning disabilities such as dyslexia and attention deficit disorder, as well as to the more obvious mental and physical handicaps traditionally catered for under the previous system.
- Require that the specifications for all building rehabilitation projects or new school buildings take full account of the needs of disabled youngsters. The team saw too many schools where thresholds between rooms were too high, doors to toilets and classrooms too narrow and stairs too uncompromising to allow wheelchair access or help a disabled child get around.
- Continue recent efforts to co-ordinate the work of the various Ministries (Health, Social Security and Labour, Finance and Education) for the maximum benefit of special needs children and their families. Not only is fragmentation of services inefficient, it also makes already disadvantaged families even more vulnerable to neglect: "When everyone is in charge, no one is in charge."

Summary of recommendations on social inclusion

Access, equity and social issues

- Elevate early childhood education to an even higher priority because of its importance for access and equity in the Republic. In particular, Lithuania should intensify its commitment to increasing the participation of children in pre-school at age 3 and the number of children prepared to enter school at age 6. The team is also concerned about the need for careful consideration of the impact of optimisation on pre-school education in rural areas.
- Target social support on at-risk children and families. The Lithuanian Constitution, laws and policy are clear that every child – Lithuanian as well as minority – is entitled to an education of equal quality, in a school environment that is free

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of religious, gender or cultural bias. Lithuania is also a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Society thus generally accepts that the promotion of children's rights is good for children and also for society as a whole. Many of the factors that are known to put children at risk, however – such as family poverty, poor housing and family breakdown – need better, co-ordinated help, targeted specifically on support for children.

- Use schools as "early warning systems" for children in trouble. Teachers are often the first to notice signs like playground bullying, truancy, poor school performance, or lack of attention in class. Whole-school workshops and in-service training for teachers on drop-out prevention and community relations could make a difference: prevention is better than cure.
- Reduce unnecessary pressure on children to "succeed" academically. While all schools and teachers rejoice in excellence and like to praise star performers, this can lead to a judgmental atmosphere that discourages average and slow learners. Academic failure is one of the reasons for leaving school most frequently quoted by drop-outs and street children.
- Provide training for teachers interested in working with troubled youngsters, *e.g.* in ward homes or Youth Schools. Universities have only recently (1999) begun to graduate qualified social workers; they are still a rare commodity, but they could be valuable in providing special services *e.g.* to the recently established Children's Helpline, outreach programmes with street children and training for teachers, NGOs and community volunteers.

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Notes

1. Twice as many girls as boys attend specialised secondary schools, while boys more often attend vocational schools.
2. Statistics Lithuania (1999). *Svietimas/Education*. Vilnius. p. 16.
3. The MONEE Project CEE/CIS/Baltics (November 1999). *After the Fall: The Human Impact of Ten Years of Transition*. UNICEF/ICDC. p. 5.
4. The MONEE Project Regional Monitoring Report No. 6 (1999). *Women in Transition*. UNICEF: International Child Development Centre. Florence. p. 10.
5. Unemployed men are more likely to seek an income from the "grey" economy and more likely to move from place to place in order to find work; also, more women are employed in low-wage (public) sectors such as nursing or teaching, and less able to find second jobs or overtime work to supplement their income.
6. Ministry of Social Security and Labour (1999). *Social Report* 1998. Vilnius. p. 36.
7. *Ibid.*, 1998. Vilnius. p. 176.
8. Ministry of Social Security and Labour (1998). *Social Report* 1997. Vilnius. p. 13.
9. Ministry of Social Security and Labour (1999). *Social Report* 1998. Vilnius. p. 95.
10. The review team heard far more alarming figures, *e.g.* 11 000 children without parental care in Lithuania, 2 000-3 000 of them in Vilnius alone. No confirmation of these figures could be found, and therefore the more conservative estimates have been used here.
11. *Street Children/Children in the Street*. A Joint Programme of the King Baudouin Foundation and the Soros Foundations in Partnership with the World Bank. Brussels: King Baudouin Foundation, 1999, p. 11.
12. The MONEE Project Regional Monitoring Report No. 4 (1997). *Children at Risk in Central and Eastern Europe: Perils and Promises*. Summary. UNICEF: International Child Development Centre. Florence. pp. 11-12.
13. At the time of the review team's visit in October 1999, 485 children with special needs were reported as not currently receiving education. These children have, however, been identified and efforts are being made to make provision for them.
14. The Law on Special Education of the Republic of Lithuania, Sept. 1, 1999, Section 1, § 4.
15. *Ibid.* Section 1, § 32-33.
16. Ministry of Social Security and Labour (1998). *Social Report* 1997. Vilnius. p. 91.
17. The MONEE Project Regional Monitoring Report No. 6 (1999). *Women in Transition*. UNICEF: International Child Development Centre. Florence. p. 136.

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18. Because the law allows special needs children to take up to two years longer to complete their basic education, the grade (grade 10) is given here rather than the normal age limit of 16.
19. Interview with Dainius Puras, Department of Social Pediatrics and Child Psychiatry, Vilnius University, Vilnius Child Development Centre, 28 October 1999.
20. Ministry of Social Security and Labour (1999). *Social Report* 1998. Vilnius. p. 179.
21. The Government of Lithuania Programme for 1997-2000. Vilnius, 1997.
22. Ministry of Social Security and Labour (1998). Social Report 1997. Vilnius. p. 94.

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Chapter 7

The System of Higher Education

History[1]

Higher education in Lithuania has a long tradition and has faced extraordinary challenges as Lithuania has been subjected to repeated changes in external control over the centuries. Vilnius University (initially, Vilnius Academy), founded in 1579, is considered the first classical institution of higher education in Eastern Europe. The establishment of an institution of higher learning reflected the maturity of the Lithuanian society at the time and also the realisation of the importance of higher education for the cultural identity of the nation and its successful development.

At the end of the 18th century, the Academy was named the Principal School of Lithuania and then, in 1803 by order of the Russian Tsar, the institution was named the university. In 1832 following the 1830-31 Uprising, the Russian authorities closed the university and colleges of theology and medicine were established. Then in 1842, the Russian authorities removed these institutions from Lithuania and for three-quarters of a century there was no higher education institution (HEI) in Lithuania.

When independence was declared on February 16, 1918, an initial effort was made to reopen Vilnius University, but the Red Army occupied Vilnius and from 1919 to 1939, Poland occupied Vilnius. During this time, the Stephen Bathory University functioned in Vilnius on the grounds of Vilnius University, but instruction was in Polish and most of the professors were from Polish universities. The Vilnius University statute, prepared in 1918 in anticipation of the opening that did not occur, served as the basis for the Lithuanian University established in 1922 in Kaunas, the interim capital. The Lithuanian University (renamed Vytautus Magnus University in 1930) became the intellectual and cultural life of inter-war Lithuania. A number of other more specialised institutions of higher education were established in this period.

After Vilnius was again made part of Lithuania in 1939, Vilnius University was re-established and three faculties were transferred from Vytautus Magnus University to Vilnius and classes in Lithuanian began in 1940. With the Soviet occupation of Lithuania in 1940, Vytautus Magnus University was restructured. The Faculty of

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Theology and Philosophy was closed and while some faculties were left intact, many lecturers from the University and other institutions were relieved of their duties and a considerable number of lecturers, employees and students were arrested, sent into exile or imprisoned. Then, in 1943, under German occupation of Lithuania, Vytautus Magnus University and Vilnius University as well as other HEIs were closed.

In the Soviet occupation after WWII, many HEIs of Lithuania that existed before the war (including Vilnius University and Vytautus Magnus University) were reopened. However, all institutions were subject to the centralised control of Moscow and the contents and form of studies were changed to conform to Soviet ideology and policy. Over years of Soviet occupation, the higher education system was restructured to meet the priorities of the Soviet command economy and military. Vytautus Magnus University was closed in 1950, but other specialised institutions were established. Student enrolments, especially in engineering, medicine, agriculture and other applied sciences, increased rapidly. Prior to the re-establishment of independence, 12 HEIs functioned in Lithuania. Despite Soviet control, Lithuania preserved the right to teach in HEIs in the Lithuanian language and only 15% of students studied in Russian.

Reform of Lithuania's higher education began in the 1980s in the climate of *glasnost*, the new openness and democracy movements and the deterioration of the Soviet economy and governmental institutions. These developments established the foundation for the system of higher education that emerged when independence was formally re-established. Discussions began about reform in the content and structure of studies and improvement of institutional management. Through the initiative of Lithuanian scientists living in Lithuania and abroad, Vytautus Magnus University was recreated in 1989 using programmes and the experience from Western universities. In 1989, many Lithuanian institutions had already prepared new draft statutes.

Immediately after declaring re-establishment of independence, Lithuania established the basic legal framework for higher education. The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania establishes the principle of university autonomy and guarantees free studies for qualified students. Laws enacted immediately included The Law of the Republic of Lithuania Concerning the Approval of the Status of Vilnius University (1990), provisions in the overall education framework law, the Law on Education (1991), the Law on Research and Higher Education (science and studies). These laws emphasised the principle of democracy, autonomy of institutions of higher education and research and exhibited confidence in the academy to ensure academic freedom and quality. The Law on Research and Higher Education provided only a general outline of the role of the State in regulation of higher education. It was anticipated that the State would ensure responsiveness of the autonomous institutions to public and societal priorities through

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Government regulation, subsidies, State orders, financial agreements and other financial and standard measures.

In spite of the bitter historic experiences of the Lithuanian people and state, the drive for national independence has always been linked with the determination to develop an advanced and well-structured educational system. The overall impression of the OECD review team is that society, the academic community and the Lithuanian Government and Parliament (*Seimas*) appreciate the important role of education for the country's development. It is also gratifying to find that the changes in the higher education sector are being introduced through extensive consultations among all stakeholders: students, teachers, employers, ministries and *Seimas* as well as the President of the Republic. The cultural development of a nation and its potential for economic prosperity are closely linked with the strength of its system of higher education. Lithuanian society is in a period of dramatic change: regained state independence, transition towards a market economy and gradual integration of the country into European structures. The higher education system plays a crucial role in achieving these priority national goals and objectives. The OECD, therefore, wholeheartedly concurs with the observation of the 1999 White Paper on Higher Education prepared by the MoES that:

> Expenses for education and science are an extremely significant long-term investment in the growing economy of the country and improving social structure, striving to form an harmonious society, based on national, humane and humanistic principles. That investment is returned constantly and plentifully to the State and society.[2]

At the start of the 21st century Lithuania's higher education system faces many challenges with national and international dimensions. The higher education sector is undergoing profound reforms to adapt to the current needs of the country and also to international developments. It is a task of considerable difficulty to design and introduce the necessary changes in the best interest of society.

- In fast-changing national and international market conditions, the best formula for cohesion between market needs, personal aspirations of citizens and governmental policies is particularly hard to find.
- The integration of the country into European and Euro-Atlantic structures is a priority policy. To facilitate the process, profound reforms of all sectors are taking place. The changes affect legislation, economy, social policies, national security and other spheres. A modern, efficient and flexible higher education system can have a strong positive effect on these developments.
- In Europe and the developed world a gradual transition towards mass higher education is taking place, driven by demands of the labour market and the changing structure of the economy. This means that more and more people aim to obtain higher education.

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- The mission of universities is widening. HEIs are expected to provide a wide range of educational services to people of all age groups. Diversification of higher education is an essential feature of current developments.
- The role of information technologies in the coming era of the "information society" deeply affects all spheres of human activity. Education for the information society has become one of the most important tasks of HEIs.

Status of reform and remaining challenges

In the view of the OECD team, Lithuania has made significant progress over the past decade in higher education reform. The most important achievements of the first stage of reforms in the higher education sector can be summarised as follows:

- Restoring a national system of higher education after the country regained its independence.
- Liberating higher education from strict State and political-ideological control.
- Giving HEIs autonomy for self-governance and enforcing freedom of teaching and research.
- Updating and modernising the contents of study programmes to reflect current developments in various scientific fields and significant changes in the social sciences and the humanities.
- Establishing a more flexible, three-level system of university studies, similar to many Western systems, to respond better to market needs and to the personal choice of students.
- Creating favourable conditions for the recognition of academic degrees and professional qualifications abroad.
- Integrating science and studies within the mission of HEIs.
- Establishing new study programmes and study fields reflecting developments in higher education and science in Europe and throughout the world and demands of a market economy.
- Internationalising studies including Lithuanian participation in the main higher education programmes of the European Union. HEIs and their academic staff developed extensive international co-operation in teaching and research.
- Succeeding in preparing higher education graduates to join the European education programmes and labour market.
- Implementing assessment systems of institutions and study programmes for both the university and college sectors.

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International co-operation in the higher education sector

After Lithuania regained independence, the doors for international co-operation of HEIs and their staff were opened wide. Many bilateral and multilateral agreements facilitate the mobility of staff and students and joint activities in studies and research are widespread. In addition, a multi-country agreement has been concluded to develop a project on "a common higher education space" of the Nordic and Baltic countries.

European Union programmes for co-operation in the higher education and research sectors with the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe have had a significant influence on the reforms and the development of higher education in Lithuania. The national EC-Phare programme has funded several projects that have aided the formulation of priorities for the second phase of reforms in the higher education sector. Two EC-Phare Multi-Country Programmes – on Distance Education and Quality Assurance in Higher Education – have contributed to significant progress in both directions.

The EC-TEMPUS programme has had a substantial impact on many important developments in the sector:

- Student and staff mobility;
- Development of curricula;
- Institutional management;
- Development plans of faculties and institutions;
- Definition of strategic policies in the higher education sector.

The EC COPERNICUS programme for co-operation in research has aided the scientific activities of HEIs during the most difficult times of financial constraint.

As a result, HEIs in Lithuania have gained valuable experience in international activities. This experience forms a solid basis for future successful participation in the framework programmes of the EC, the SOCRATES programme for co-operation in the educational sphere, as well as in other initiatives and projects of the European Union. Regional and bilateral co-operation programmes have also contributed to the success of the reforms. Collaboration among the three Baltic States and international support from the Nordic countries, among others, have been especially important.

The educational programmes and projects of the Council of Europe and UNESCO have widened the collaboration in such fields as the introduction of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), the international recognition of diplomas, the creation of an international network of educational observatories and the harmonisation of legislation. Reform has also been spurred by Lithuania's efforts to conform to international expectations such as the Convention of the Council of

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Europe and the UNESCO declaration on the Recognition of Qualifications Related to Higher Education in the States of the European Region ratified by Lithuania. Lithuania was obligated to follow the principles and procedures for recognition of diplomas and qualifications regulated by the Convention. The Lithuanian Minister of Education and Science was one of the 29 European ministers who signed the Bologna Joint Declaration on June 19, 1999.

Second phase of reform

At the time of the OECD review, Lithuania was embarking on the second phase of higher education reform. The new Law on Higher Education (still under consideration at the time of the review but subsequently enacted in March 2000) provides a good foundation for further progress. Lithuania now faces a major challenge in implementing the provisions of this law – in translating the law and concepts into concrete strategies and actions. In some cases, further refinement of the Law on Higher Education may be necessary to realise these objectives fully. In more specific terms, the following are issues that, in the view of the OECD team, require attention:

- Implementing the new binary system of higher education, especially the new colleges.
- Developing and implementing new policies on financing HEIs.
- Developing a long-term policy regarding financing for students.
- Strengthening the internal governance and management of higher education establishments.
- Strengthening quality assessment and public accountability.
- Continuing development of the open/distance learning system as a critical means to provide access and opportunity to youth and adults throughout Lithuania and to improve the cost-effectiveness of educational delivery.
- Strengthening state co-ordination and long-term planning.
- Further integration of higher education and research. The principal aim is to integrate public research institutes into the higher education system.

Legislative framework and system structure

The Lithuanian higher education system is regulated by provisions in the country's Constitution, four laws, a number of government decrees and by the statutes of HEIs. The statutes are approved by the Parliament (*Seimas*). The four laws are: The Law on Research and Higher Education (1991), The Law on Education (1991). The Law Concerning the Approval of the Status of Vilnius University (1990) and the Law on Higher Education adopted on 21 March 2000.

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Initial legal framework

At the time of the OECD review, the new Law on Higher Education was still under development. The Law on Research and Higher Education, regulating the sectors of higher education and research, had not been amended since its adoption. The act outlined the functioning of the system in quite general terms. As a result, the activities of HEIs were also regulated by a number of government decrees. Some of the more important were:

- Qualitative Regulations of Higher Education (1993, 1997).
- Regulations for the Establishment and Assessment of HEIs (1993, 1996).
- Model Bylaw of the State Scientific Establishment (1991, 1998).
- Regulation on Approval of Certificates for Education Obtained in the Republic of Lithuania (1993).
- General Regulations of the System of Scientific Degree and Pedagogical Scientific Titles (1996).
- Regulation of the Lithuanian State Fund for Research and Higher Education (1993, 1998).
- Decree on Students and Free Listeners of the State HEIs (1996, 1998).
- Regulation for Recognition of Education Acquired Abroad (1998).
- Regulation of the Co-ordination of the Conditions for Admission to State HEIs (1998).

The Laws enacted in 1991 and the subsequent government decrees introduced significant changes in the system. Nevertheless, they did not provide a good basis for harmonious functioning of the higher education system and its successful development. The absence of solid legislation created instability in the system and opened doors for different interpretations and discrepancies in the policies of HEIs. The very broad interpretation of institutional autonomy was another problem resulting from 1991 Law. Introducing university autonomy in the early 1990s was a necessary and perhaps the most significant change in the higher education system in Lithuania. Institutions were enabled to reform the educational content of their academic programmes and courses. HEIs were also able to diversify the educational services they offer and to operate under the competitive conditions of a free market. Universities started to accept additional students on a fee-paying basis and to determine the amounts those students pay. Under severely constrained financing, these additional funds contributed considerably to preserving more normal conditions for studies and to developing new programmes and courses. However, the 1991 Law did not provide for the necessary mechanisms for social control over the activities of HEIs. In a democratic society, these controls can be realised in different ways:

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- Participation of representatives of different stakeholders in the governing bodies of HEIs.
- Increased role of students in the decision-making processes of institutions.
- Regular public reporting on the activities of institutions.
- A stronger role of the Government in regulating state-funded institutions.

At the time of the OECD review in October 1999, the problems with the 1991 legislation were well appreciated by government, the *Seimas* and by the HEIs themselves. All parties agreed that a new legislative framework was needed. The MoES prepared a new Law on Higher Education; this document was subjected to a long process of refinement through extensive consultations with HEIs and representatives of the Committee for Education, Culture and Science at the *Seimas*. The President of the Republic's Working Group on Educational Matters played a special role. Extensive research studies on the higher education system carried out during the past years have contributed to the high quality of the document. These research studies have been co-ordinated by the MoES and financed by the national EC-Phare programme, the EC-TEMPUS programme and the MoES.

New Law on Higher Education

The *Seimas* adopted the new Law in March 2000. The Law was effective as of September 2000. In the view of the OECD team, it represents a significant development of higher education in Lithuania. It is a well-structured and balanced document and outlines the major reforms in the higher education sector that are presently considered of prime importance. The new Law on Higher Education[3] defines:

- The system of studies in higher education.
- The principles for acquisition of professional qualifications, qualification and research degrees.
- The limits of higher education establishment autonomy and of State regulation of their activities.
- The rights and duties of academic staff and research workers and students.
- The legal grounds for the founding, reorganisation and liquidation of higher education establishments.
- The basic requirements for higher education establishments and study programmes.
- Evaluation and registration of study programmes.
- Principles of financing higher education establishments and studies.

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New binary higher education system

The establishment of the legal foundation for a binary higher education system – and especially for the new college sector – is one of the most important contributions of the new law. At the time of the OECD review, there were ambiguities in the legal basis for the development of a new college sector within higher education. The law also clarifies the role, mission and governance of colleges in relationship to both universities and the vocational colleges from which some of the new colleges are evolving.

Principal state institutions

The new law defines the roles of principal state institutions:

- The *Seimas* enacts the laws and statutes governing higher education, establishes State universities and, on the advice of the Government, adopts decisions on the reorganisation of a state university or its branches or the reorganisation of a state college into a university. The *Seimas* also adopts State university statutes and its amendments or supplements.
- The Government and the Ministry, in accordance with the procedure established by legal acts, execute state regulation of the activities of higher education establishments. The responsibilities of the Government, include:
  - Approving the Lithuanian higher education system development plan developed and recommended by the MoES.
  - Acting, with the advice of the MoES, on the establishment or reorganisation of state colleges and on the statutes for state colleges.
  - Carrying out Government (primarily through the Ministry of Finance but with the advice of the MoES) State budgetary and financing policies and making allocations to higher education establishments.
  - Registering higher education establishments through the Registry maintained by the MoES.
  - Deciding on higher education qualifications and degrees.
  - Deciding major issues such as the use and disposition of State property.
- The MoES is responsible for a broad range of planning, quality assurance and regulatory tasks. Many of these are carried out through the Department of Science and Higher Education within the MoES.
- The Lithuanian Scientific Council is a scientific expert arm of the *Seimas* and the Government for the organisation of science and studies as well as for financial issues.

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- The Higher Education Council is an expert institution on strategic higher education development issues, which shall be formed and function in accordance with the regulations approved by the Government.
- The Lithuanian Scientific Council, the Rectors' Conference of Lithuanian Universities, the Directors' Conference of Lithuanian Colleges, the Union (Unions) of Student Representatives co-ordinate Interrelations between higher education establishments and relations with the public authorities and municipal institutions. Other societies of HEIs, non-profit and other organisations and associations also co-ordinate these relationships.

The Department of Higher Education and Research, a separate legal entity under the MoES established in 1997, is responsible for the co-ordination of the day-to-day oversight of MoES responsibilities for the sector. Though the department has only a small number of staff, the efficiency of its work is quite impressive. It is the main driving force in preparing new legislative and regulatory documents. The department has co-ordinated a number of projects aimed at collecting extensive statistical data on the activities of the sector. It also co-ordinates a number of international projects.

The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education under the MoES is engaged mostly in evaluating the quality of study programmes in HEIs. However, quality assessment for the new college sector has been assigned to the vocational education and training unit of the MoES. From the perspective of the OECD team as discussed later in this chapter, this placement of the need for these establishments to have strong "horizontal" relationships with the labour market and regional economies as well as "vertical" relationships within higher education is of primary importance.

The Lithuanian State Fund for Science and Studies is the entity responsible, among other functions, for administering the student loan programme authorised by the Law on Higher Education.

Higher education institutions

Types of Higher Education Establishments

The definitions in the new law of university and college – which may be either State or non-State – are as follows:

- A University shall be a higher education establishment, where university studies prevail and the majority of students comprise those studying according to university study programmes, research is carried out, master and doctoral studies are organised and (or) professional artistic creative activity of high level is developed and art postgraduate studies exist. The status of university may be granted to a higher education establishment

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performing the above mentioned functions even if its name does not include a word "university".[4]

- A College shall be a higher education establishment, where non-university studies prevail and the majority of students are those studying in accordance with non-university study programmes, applied research and (or) development or professional arts are developed. The college name may not include words "university" and "academy".[5]

There are 18 HEIs of the university type in Lithuania; 15 of them are state HEIs, comprising 9 universities and 6 academies that provide higher education on three levels (basic, specialised and doctoral studies). Only three non-state HEIs have been established so far – the Vilnius Saint Joseph Seminary (May 1999), the Higher International School of Management in Kaunas and Telsiai Seminary of Priests (2000). Another non-state institution, Lithuanian Christian College, was authorised to offer baccalaureate degrees in 2000. All of these non-state institutions award university level degrees. Table 42 lists the universities, together with the number of students.

The universities can be categorised into three groups:

- Classical universities: Vilnius University, Vytautas Magnus University, Klaipeda University and iauliai University. These schools offer programmes in humanities, natural sciences, mathematics, social sciences and other fields. The profile of Vilnius Pedagogical University is quite similar, although there is more emphasis on teacher training.
- Technical universities: Kaunas University of Technology and Vilnius Gediminas Technical University. These schools provide training in engineering but also in management, business administration and some other fields.
- Specialised institutions: Lithuanian University of Agriculture, Lithuanian Academy of Music, Lithuanian Law Academy, Vilnius Academy of Arts, Kaunas Medical University, Lithuania Military Academy and Lithuanian Institute of Physical Education, Lithuanian Academy of Veterinary Studies; Vilnius Saint Joseph Seminary; Kaunas Higher International School of Management, Telsiai Seminary of Priests.

The number of specialised institutions is quite considerable. A long-term objective of the MoES is to consolidate the network of state HEIs in order to improve their financial efficiency and their capacity to develop studies and research, especially in interdisciplinary and new fields. The impression of the OECD team is that there is a strong resistance to such plans by institutions of higher education.

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Table 42. **University-level higher education institutions in Lithuania**

	Institution	Year of founding	Number of students at the beginning of 1998/99 academic year
1.	Vilnius University	1579	14 069
2.	Vilnius Gediminas Technical University	1965 (orig. 1922)	8 472
3.	Vilnius Pedagogical University	1935	7 485
4.	Kaunas University of Technology	1950 (orig. 1922)	13 261
5.	Vitautas Magnus University	1922	3 795
6.	Klaipeda University	1991 (orig. 1950)	4 463
7.	Lithuanian Academy of Music	1933	1 072
8.	Vilnius Academy of Arts	1940	1 256
9.	Kaunas Medical University	1919	3 184
10.	Lithuanian Institute of Physical Education	1934	2 084
11.	iauliai University	1957 (orig. 1954)	5 644
12.	Lithuanian Academy of Law	1990	3 222
13.	Lithuanian Academy of Veterinary Studies	1936	862
14.	Lithuanian University of Agriculture	1996 (orig. 1924)	5 113
15.	Military Academy of Lithuania	1994	550
16.	Vilnius Saint Joseph Seminary (non-state)	1999	63
17.	Higher International School of Management, Kaunas (non-state)	2000	Opened Sept. 2000
18	Telsiai Seminary of Priests	2000	

Lithuanian HEIs train students at three levels:

- Undergraduate studies (*pagrindines studijos*). These usually last 4 years (5 – for some institutions) and lead to a Bachelor's degree (*Bakalauro laipsnis*), equivalent academic diploma (*Auktojo mokslo diplomas*), and/or professional degree.
- Specialised studies. These last 1.5 to 2 years after the basic study programme and lead to a Master's degree (*Magistro laipsnis*) or a specialised professional degree.
- Doctoral studies. A doctoral degree (*Daktaro laipsnis*) can be obtained from studies in HEIs but also in state research institutes (in a joint programme with an institution of higher education). The duration of doctoral studies is 3-4 years.
- In some HEIs, students can attend an integrated programme leading directly to the Master's degree. The duration of such studies is usually 5 years.

International academic degrees were introduced in 1993 (in some Universities – even in 1992). The principal aim has been to better adjust the educational process to market demands, with several levels of studies. Another objective has been to facilitate the international recognition of degrees obtained in Lithuanian HEIs. The public is still not fully confident in the quality of professional qualifications obtained via undergraduate Bachelor's studies. The very constrained financing of

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HEIs during the introduction of the new degree scale has aggravated the problem. An intensified learning process through improved infrastructure, introduction of new learning technologies and more effective teaching methods is essential to improve the training and satisfy the expectations of students as well as employers.

The new Master's degree studies are already viewed as an excellent form of acquiring specialised knowledge and competence in narrower fields as well as of obtaining qualification in new fields of studies. HEIs are devoting much attention and effort to developing high-quality Master's degree programmes. Nevertheless, at the initial stages of introducing these new types of studies, the absence of clear guidance with regard to the content and objectives of Master's studies has resulted in programmes that were not well designed. Some problems have arisen in the recognition of such studies in other countries. It is hoped that the new Law will clarify the structure and objectives of the different educational levels and degrees. This will contribute to the coherence of studies in different institutions, facilitate the application of the credit transfer system and support the international recognition of degrees.

With the introduction of Bachelor, Master's and Doctoral levels of studies, all curricula of study programmes have been reviewed and restructured. This process has had a very positive impact, since it has led to an overall review of not only the structure of studies but also of the content of courses. The European Union's TEMPUS programme has significantly aided the renewal of study programmes. The educational content in many fields, such as humanities, arts, political and social sciences, has been changed to reflect modern concepts and trends in the respective fields.

Colleges

Colleges for students who had completed secondary education existed in Lithuania in the initial period of independence and survived until 1940. Within the Soviet education system, colleges were turned into special secondary schools – *technicums* – providing study programmes combining a shortened secondary curriculum and specialised professional or technical subjects. *Technicums* were again reorganised as "colleges" when Lithuanian independence was re-established. A Governmental order and then the Law on Education (1991) legalised the establishment of "colleges" on the base of special secondary schools. In 1999, there were 70 State and 18 non-State colleges providing post-secondary professional training programmes.

As indicated above, the 2000 Law on Higher Education authorises colleges within higher education (at the ISCED/5B level). At the time of the OECD review, the conditions under which vocational colleges could make the transition to colleges within the higher education sector were being widely discussed. In the first phase of transition being implemented in 2000, vocational colleges selected to

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participate were chosen on the basis of quality assessment procedures designed and implemented with support from the EC-Phare programme. All new State colleges will be formed from the two or more existing vocational colleges. In the first phase the number of new colleges was limited to 7 and formed from vocational colleges deemed to be of the best quality in Lithuania which started in September 2000. After a three-year period of development, the institutions are to present themselves for accreditation. The 4 new State sector colleges are in Utena (created from 2 vocational colleges), Vilnius (from 3), Kaunas (from 2) and Alytus (from 1). There are 2 new private colleges in Vilnius and 1 in Kaunas. After a college is awarded this new status, it will organise 3 to 4-year non-university higher education studies, leading to a professional degree. It is expected that at least 12 of the existing 67 colleges will be awarded the status of HEIs.

Initial selection process and quality assessment

As indicated above, the vocational colleges selected to participate in the first phase were chosen on the basis of quality assessment procedures designed and implemented with support from the EC-Phare programme. All vocational colleges, except those that at the time were under the Ministry of Agriculture and since transferred to the MoES, were invited to apply to join the new sector. The institutions applying in the first phase of selection of new colleges included 10 state and 6 private colleges. The MoES selected 8 state and 4 private colleges to be considered further. These 12 colleges (subsequently 11 when one of the private colleges gained university status) were invited to present more detailed self-evaluations of their higher education study programmes. The quality assessment procedures used in the formation of the new sector focussed on institutions and not just on study programmes. Those institutions that applied were required to present information about the college mission, teaching and research, study programmes and relation to market needs and number of students and turnover. They were also required to submit information on the number of academic staff and qualifications, management structure and its effectiveness, finance and effectiveness of study process organisation, resources and facilities, recent developments and improvements based progress since earlier self-assessment reports. Experts examined each study programme and gave their opinion to a specially formed committee. The report of this committee was made available to members of visiting panels. Visiting panels were made up of university staff, representatives of the social sector and (for the later visits) members of the college staff that had been visited previously. All panel members received training for their role under the EC-Phare programme and the colleges also received some preparation.

The role of the visiting panel was to seek to understand the self-evaluation of the college and to verify the internal judgements made about quality. The panel then formed an opinion about whether the institution was sufficiently well prepared

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to become part of the new sector (including detailed consideration of the preparedness to run the first year programmes. Each visit took place over a period of 2.5 days and EC-Phare Experts attended in an advisory role but did not participate in the decision making process. During the visit, panels had separate meetings with students, management staff, other teaching staff and representatives of social partners. At the end of the visit an oral report was made and this was followed by a written report linking conclusions to evidence. All parties had the opportunity to correct matters of fact in the final report. The panel was charged with making a decision about whether the college could proceed to the next stage and making both short term and long term recommendations about areas of improvement.

An Accreditation (Quality Assessment) Council – including representatives of social partners – has been set up for the new college sector and has received training in its role with EC-Phare support. The Council examined the reports and recommendations and passed its own decision to the Minister for final verification. An Accreditation (Quality Assessment) service has been set up within the vocational education and training methodological centre of the MoES and three staff have been appointed and trained with EC-Phare support.

Accreditation will be possible after 3 further years. During this period, the new colleges must make annual self-evaluations. One of the important factors that will determine accreditation is the demonstrated ability of the new institutions to show a capacity for autonomous self-regulation and development according the aims of the new sector. The intent is that accreditation will mark the start of a regular cycle of annual self-evaluation and periodic external review using similar procedures to the ones already developed. To support this materials and training on self-evaluation have been developed with EC-Phare support and aimed at supporting autonomous development based on evaluation.

Two critical issues related to quality for the new colleges are size and percentage of part-time staff. The new State institutions are being formed through the amalgamation of two or more vocational colleges in order to create entities of sufficient size to maintain a core of full-time, dedicated staff. However, it was not thought appropriate to require private institutions to amalgamate. There was some concern that private colleges should be viable educational communities with sufficient full-time or dedicated staff to sustain development and self-regulation and to avoid any danger of policy being based on narrow commercial interests. In the event, the panels were satisfied that the applicants had realistic plans for growth and for moving towards an appropriate ratio of full-time to part-time staff. This issue will be revisited at the accreditation stage and a suggested target of 50% full time staff has been set.

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Invitations have already been sent for the second phase of development. The same procedures (with minor modifications made after evaluation of the first phase) will be used. It is possible that some applicants will not be successful in their application.

Issues regarding college sector

As emphasised at several points in this report, the OECD reviewers believe that the new college sector is one of the most important developments in Lithuanian higher education. The OECD recommends that Lithuania continue to place high priority on development of this sector, emphasising quality assurance, strong links with the labour market and regional economic development and adequate State budgetary support. Several points about the development of these sectors from the experience of other countries are relevant to the situation in Lithuania.

First, without strong State selection criteria and quality assessment and accreditation requirements, the pressure of post-secondary vocational institutions to become colleges can lead to a proliferation of small institutions of questionable quality and economic viability. Therefore, it is essential to require the merger of smaller entities to create colleges of sufficient size, breadth of study programmes and percentage of full-time permanent academic staff. The OECD team recommends that Lithuania consider a minimum size for State colleges of 1 200 students except in those cases (such as rural areas) where such a size would not be feasible.[6] The team also recommends that at least 50% of the academic and professional staff be full-time and permanent staff. The team also strongly supports the provision in the Law on Education that 50% of the staff must have no less than three years' work experience in the sphere of the subject taught.[7]

Second, effective measures in State structure, financing and quality assurance must be taken to insulate the new college sector from strong pressures for vertical relationships with universities that could undermine the colleges' primary mission. That mission, as defined in the new Law on Higher Education, is "to prepare specialists of practical orientation, capable of working separately in the spheres of education, culture, economy and other spheres".[8] In other words, the intent is that most students will enter the labour market rather than enter the university directly following completion of study programmes. The success of these institutions will depend on the strength of their horizontal relationships with the labour market and with regional economic development.

The pressures for links with universities come from several sources – some positive and others negative. A positive reason for these links is that some of the college study programmes should be designed explicitly for students who intend to transfer at a later date to universities. These programmes must meet university

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quality standards. Another positive reason is that universities can share expertise and access to academic and administrative support services with colleges.

However, it is important to structure quality assessment processes to ensure that university standards are not inappropriately imposed on colleges, or *vice versa*. The definition of "quality" for study programmes at colleges should differ in important respects from the definition of "quality" for university programmes. The key to quality at the colleges should be the performance of these institutions in preparing students who have the level of knowledge and skill to succeed in the labour market and for lifelong learning. For universities, the definition of quality is closely linked to preparation for further study and research in academic disciplines at the graduate and post-graduate levels. Because of these important differences, the OECD team endorses the initial placement of the responsibility for quality assessment for the new colleges in the vocational education and training unit of the MoES – and not in the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education.

The experience of other countries is that universities can also seek links with colleges (as branch campuses or affiliated entities) to either generate additional revenue or counter potential competition. Already faced with serious limitations in State budgetary resources, universities often see newly developing college sectors as competitors for these budgetary resources and therefore as potential threats to their quality. Gaining control of these new colleges – as branches or affiliated units – is a way for the universities to contain the competition. The consequence, however, can be that the development of the colleges – especially their horizontal links with the labour market – can be severely restricted.

Still another tendency is for some to see the new non-university sector not as a network of discrete institutions with missions that are distinct from universities and a series of study programmes oriented to the needs of the labour market. The colleges should be entities that are committed – as whole institutions – to the practical, applied dimensions of the mission. Colleges should have academic and professional staff with expertise in their fields, experience in working with students who are less academically prepared than those who gain university admission and strong ties with social partners and the labour market. International experience demonstrates that if college-level study programmes (those at the ISCED/5B level) are placed within or subject to the priorities of universities, the academic, discipline-focused, research-oriented culture of the university creates a negative environment for the development of strong college-level study programmes. The OECD team therefore recommends that Lithuania discourage the development of "college-level" study programmes in universities. The team also recommends that Lithuania recognise that a strong college system will be based on institutions whose quality assessment, governance, financing and staff qualifications are aligned with the college mission.

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Because of these tendencies, the OECD review team recommends that Lithuania maintain a degree of structural and organisational separation between universities and colleges in the quality assessment, management and financing. At the same time, Lithuania should develop policies and strategies to promote a degree of harmonisation and co-ordination between the sectors, so that students can move between the sectors and the sectors can share resources and expertise.

Third, the OECD team is concerned that the newly designated colleges may not be able to compete with the universities for necessary State budgetary support unless the MoES and Government emphasise the importance of this new sector in the budgetary process. As reviewed in a later section of this chapter on financing, the budgetary and resource allocation processes for higher education establishments and the current colleges (those in the vocational sector) are separate and distinct. The colleges have been funded through the MoES whereas universities are funded directly through the Ministry of Finance through a separate budgetary and allocation process. The new colleges are now higher education establishments under the Law on Higher Education and therefore should be considered in the budget process with the other HEIs. The OECD team recommends that the MoES and Government give high priority to State budgetary support for the developing colleges and guard against efforts to oppose necessary funding for the sector. It will be important to ensure fair and equitable distribution of higher education funds so that the development of the binary system is not jeopardised.

Finally, the OECD team underscores the potential of the new colleges to contribute to regional economic development – serving as points for regional access to youth, providing retraining and staff development for the adult workforce and providing technical and applied research for employers, municipalities and other regional entities. Because these are new roles and functions for the entities that are being drawn together to form the colleges, a special effort will be necessary to develop the capacity. The OECD team therefore recommends that the MoES undertake a special initiative – in collaboration with other ministries such as the Ministry of Social Security and Labour – to develop the capacity of the new colleges to contribute to regional development. This could include national conferences, sharing of good practice and training for academic and professional staff.

Academic staff in higher education establishments

Statistical data for the academic staff in Lithuanian HEIs are presented in Table 43. The total number of lecturing staff is 7 256. Considering the number of students in the country at 74 532, the student: teacher ratio was 10.3:1 for the academic year 1998/1999. This ratio is lower than in most OECD countries. If the entire academic staff – lecturers and researchers – is considered, the ratio becomes 7:1. The optimisation of the student-teacher ratio can be a long-term objective. It will

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Table 43. **Academic staff**

	1995-96	1997-98	1998-99
Total	8 749	9 214	10 594
Pedagogical staff Total	6 560	6 586	7 256
with doctoral degree	2 756	2 756	2 946
with habil. doctor degree	440	472	514
with senior scientific titles			
Associate professors	2 150	2 333	2 442
Professors	434	518	546
Research staff	2 108	2 574	3 274

Source: Education, Publication A360, Department of Statistics, Vilnius, 1999.

be improved if the tendency of admitting more students in HEIs is preserved over several years while the number of teaching staff is kept at the same level. The situation can, however, become more complex if the plans to integrate public research institutes into the higher education system are realised. Nevertheless, the team considers that consolidation will benefit both sectors and will result in more effective use of the educational and research potential of the country.

The lecturing staff in Lithuanian universities is engaged in teaching and research activities. The average teaching load is about 600 hours per academic year; this is higher than the average in most European countries. Therefore some reduction could be considered. Reducing the teaching load of class contact hours will also reduce the heavier weekly loads for students. There will be more time for teachers to concentrate on their research tasks and for students to engage in individual work.

Many university lecturers are engaged in professional activities outside their regular duties. In most cases they teach in other HEIs, colleges and sometimes in secondary schools. The consequences for the study process are quite negative. The teaching staff is not always available for the students and the level of research activities is considerably reduced. There is no easy solution in sight for the problem.

The new Law on Higher Education seeks to address the problem of academic staff teaching in multiple institutions. The law provides that teachers and research workers may work in science and HEIs for not more than the equivalent number of hours as a full-time and part-time job combined. Furthermore, a person who wishes to work in a higher education establishment as an additional workplace, must, together with a request to be employed as a teacher or a research worker, specify his position (activities) in a main workplace and all additional workplaces.[9]

The relatively low level of salaries is, evidently, a main reason for extra activities of academic staff. An acceptable level of compensation for these staff can probably be achieved only with improvements in the management of establishments

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(including improved utilisation of existing staff) and improvements in the overall economic conditions in the country. The OECD team recommends that that salary scales for the academic staff in HEIs be improved over the long-term. First of all, the profession of lecturer and researcher has become much less popular among young university graduates. Stabilisation of the salary scales will attract able young graduates as lecturers. Secondly, the pressures for additional income from second and even third jobs will be decreased. The academic staff will focus on their principal duties as teachers and researchers.

Students in higher education establishments

After some reduction in the middle of the 1990s, the total number of students in higher education has gradually increased since 1996. The statistical data presented in Table 44 clearly show this pattern, while Table 45 compares changes of student numbers in Lithuania with trends in the European Union. Taken together, Tables 44 and 45 show that although the total number of students in Lithuanian HEIs has risen steadily in recent years, the pace of increase is much slower than in EU countries.

The enrolment ratio in higher education in Lithuania has not increased as rapidly as in Estonia and Latvia and other countries, as shown in Table 46.

Table 44. **Dynamics of student numbers in state institutions of higher education in Lithuania**

Institution	Number of students			
	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
Total	53 968	58 776	67 068	74 532
Vilnius University	10 425	10 983	12 575	14 069
Vilnius Gediminas Technical University	5 740	6 750	7 581	8 472
Vilnius Pedagogical University	4 686	4 929	6 726	7 485
Kaunas University of Technology	9 583	10 759	11 946	13 261
Vytautas Magnus University	2 547	2 980	3 296	3 795
Klaipeda University	3 688	4 208	4 312	4 463
Lithuanian Academy of Music	936	956	984	1 072
Vilnius Academy of Arts	973	1 056	1 171	1 256
Kaunas Medical University	3 112	3 110	3 167	3 184
Lithuanian Institute of Physical Education	1 344	1 509	1 831	2 084
Siauliai University	3 754	3 965	5 132	5 644
Lithuanian Academy of Law	1 958	2 060	2 540	3 222
Lithuanian Academy of Veterinary Studies	673	651	706	862
Lithuanian University of Agriculture	4 199	4 565	4 668	5 113
Military Academy of Lithuania	350	295	433	550

Source: Education, Department of Statistics, Publ. A 360, Vilnius, 1999

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Table 45. **Dynamics of student numbers in Lithuania and European Union (as compared with 1970, in percentages)**

	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	1996	1997
Lithuania	100	214	226	184	180	250	270	280
European Union	100	200	290	350	440	520	. .	. .

Source: White Book on Higher Education Reform in Lithuania, MES, Vilnius, 1999.

Figures for OECD countries show that on average one in three of today's youth will enter university-level education in the course of their lives, while one in five will enter some form of non-university tertiary education. In 14 countries for which data were available in 1998, first-time university entry rates exceed 40% in Finland, Poland and the United Kingdom and 50% in the United States. Other countries have considerably lower rates of entry; Switzerland, for example, reported 16%, although this is balanced, to some degree, by high participation rates in advanced upper secondary programmes and in non-university tertiary education. Indeed in several countries a comparatively low university entry rate is offset by wide access to non-university education (Norway, Hungary, the Netherlands).[10]

The student enrolment ratio for higher education in Lithuania is at an average level for Central and East European countries, but is markedly lower than in EU

Table 46. **Enrolment ratio in higher education in European countries (%)**

	1993	1994	1995	1996
Lithuania	26.2	26.4	28.2	31.4
Estonia	23.6	24.4	38.1	41.8
Latvia	21.5	21.8	25.7	33.3
Albania	9.6	–	–	–
Austria	42.5	44.8	46.6	–
Belgium	49.1	54.4	–	–
Bulgaria	33.2	35.4	39.4	41.2
Czech Republic	19.6	20.8	21.9	–
Denmark	44.4	45.0	45.0	–
Finland	63.2	66.9	70.3	–
Greece	40.2	38.1	42.5	–
Hungary	18.2	21.0	23.8	–
Italy	39.2	40.6	41.4	–
Norway	54.4	54.4	58.5	–
Romania	15.0	19.7	–	22.5
Slovak Rep.	17.1	18.7	20.2	22.1
Slovenia	28.3	31.6	33.3	36.4
Spain	44.2	46.1	48.6	

Source: Statistical Yearbook, UNESCO Publishing, 1998.

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Table 47. **Student distribution by field of study, in percentages**

Study area	In the European Union	In Lithuania
Humanities, Fine Arts	16	12
Social sciences	24	33
Law	9	7
Natural sciences	6	5
Medicine	12	6
Engineering, Architecture	21	26
Computers, Mathematics	4	7
Others	8	4

Source: MoES, White Book on Higher Education Reform in Lithuania, Vilnius, 1999.

countries. It should be clear that the tendency for mass higher education is a major international development. In the present economic and social environment, the demand for highly qualified employees is constantly rising. The demand of young people for higher levels of education in the coming era of the "knowledge society" and the "information society" is also a strong factor. The educational system of any country should adapt to these developments and be prepared to provide the quantity and quality of higher education they require.

The distribution of students by field of study in Lithuania and the EU is shown in Table 47. The comparison shows a quite similar distribution of students in most fields of study, although there are relatively more students in social sciences in Lithuania, at 33% of all students.

A move towards mass higher education is a strong international trend, driven by the changing structures of economic and social life. The demand for highly qualified specialists increases constantly. In some OECD Member countries, the percentage of school graduates entering higher education is expected to reach 70% in the coming years. In view of these developments, strict planning by the state of the number of student places in degree programmes, as outlined in the new Law on Higher Education, may not be as useful as expected. It is possible to leave some initiative in this respect to the HEIs. The OECD team therefore recommends that Lithuania improve long-term planning but rely more on the market and the initiative of HEIs in the determination of student numbers in specific study programmes. To avoid a surplus of students in particular fields, career planning and counselling of school graduates could be introduced.

The statistics for students registered in the three university levels of studies are presented in Table 48. Besides the national statistics, data for Lithuania's two largest universities are also given. It can be seen that the newly introduced Master's

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Table 48. **Number of students by level 1998-1999 academic year**

	Total number of students	Undergraduate students	Master's degree studies	Doctoral studies
Total	74 532	57 862	14 795	1 875
Vilnius University	14 069	10 063	3 544	461
Kaunas University of Technology	13 261	10 267	2 013	381

Source: Education, Publication A360, Department of Statistics, Vilnius, 1999.

degree studies are quite successful. Post-graduate students in Lithuania constituted 22% of all students for the academic year 1998/1999.

According to the new Law on Higher Education, students have considerable rights to participate in the management of HEIs. Students will constitute not less than 10% of Senate membership, as well as having representatives in the newly proposed governing body: the University Council. Therefore, the new legislation provides sufficient basis for active student participation in the management of HEIs. At the national level, the Lithuanian Students' Union takes part in the discussions regarding the reforms in the sector and also on special problems raised by students.

The law clarifies the requirements for admission and provides that competition for admission is to be based, in part, on secondary school graduation examinations. The OECD team views this as an important development that will increase the objectivity and transparency of higher education admissions and reduce the redundancy of examinations (see Chapter 3, Part B for discussion of this issue).

Financing of higher education

HEIs and colleges[11] in Lithuania receive the greater part of necessary funds from the state budget. In 1999 allocations from the state budget accounted for almost 76% of the incomes of HEIs and 91% of those of colleges (Table 49).[12]

State budgetary financing

At the time of the OECD review in October 1999, serious concerns were being expressed about the level of State budgetary financing for higher education. As shown in Tables 49 and 50, the state financing for both colleges and HEIs decreased between 1999 and 2000.[13] The state expenditures per higher education student of HEI and college student (calculated by the share of the Gross Domestic

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Table 49. **Sources of income of higher education institutions and colleges in Lithuania in 1999**

Source of incomes	Higher education institutions		Colleges	
	Total, thou. LTL	%	Total, thou. LTL	%
The State budget and other sources of the State	385 697.6	75.9	127 979.0	90.7
International programmes and other foreign funds	25 835.5	5.08	669.1	0.47
Tuition fees	50 741.5	9.98		
Other sources (including agreements with economic entities)	45 912.7	9.04	12 452.8	8.83
Total	508 187.3	100	141 100.9	100

Source: Ministry of Education and Science of The Republic of Lithuania, *Financing of Higher Education of Lithuanian in the New Millennium*, Vilnius, 2000, p. 22.

Product per person) have decreased steadily since 1994. Since 1998 the State funds per higher education student have decreased in absolute terms despite significant increases in prices. In 1998/2000, the allocations from the state budget to HEIs also decreased while the number of students increased (Table 50).

The OECD recognises the serious financial constraints facing the Republic of Lithuania and respects the reality of other state priorities. Nevertheless, the team strongly recommends that Lithuania assess the adequacy of current level of state bud-

Table 50. **Share of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the Republic of Lithuania per person and the budgetary funds per student**

	Share of GDP per inhabitant, Lt	Higher education institutions		Colleges	
		Funds per student, Lt	Share of GDP per student to finance studies, %	Funds per student, Lt	Share of GDP per student to finance studies, %
1992	910	480	52.7	386	42.4
1993	3 107	1 605	51.6	1 305	42.0
1994	4 543	3 002	66.1	2 361	52.0
1995	6 488	4 225	65.1	2 861	44.1
1996	8 510	5 027	59.1	3 505	41.2
1997	10 347	6 106	59.0	4 054	39.2
1998	11 599	6 650	57.3	4 033	34.8
1999	11 510	5 693	49.5	3 946	34.4
2000 (expected)	12 040	5 026	41.7	3 952	32.8

Source: Ministry of Education and Science of The Republic of Lithuania, *Financing of Higher Education of Lithuanian in the New Millennium*, Vilnius, 2000, p. 24.

Table 51. **Budgetary expenditure of the Republic of Lithuania on higher education** [1]

	Higher education institutions			Colleges		
	Annual average number of students[2]	Budgetary funds spent, thou. LTL	Spent per student, LTL[1]	Annual average number of students[2]	Budgetary funds spent, thou. LTL	Spent per student, LTL[1]
1992	54 596	26179.4	479.5	27 060	10434.5	385.6
1993	50 278	80709.1	1 605.3	23 638	30907.6	1 307.5
1994	47 103	141 407.3	3 002.1	23 156	54674.8	22 361.2
1995	47 098	198 975.1	4 224.7	22 979	65737.3	2860.8
1996	51 605	259 417.7	5 027.0	25 232	88432.1	3504.8
1997	58 569	357 608.2	6 105.8	27 870	112 998.2	3706.0
1998	64 530	429 119.4	6 649.9	30 491	122 961.8	4 032.7
1999	65 472	372 750.5	5 693.3	32 023	126 345.6	3945.5
2000	66 455	334 000.0	5 026.0	31 136	123 060.0	3952.3

1. Actual expenses of HEIs and colleges are indexed based on inflation in the corresponding year.
2. The average number of students is determined on the basis of the number of students on the list on the first day of the first six months of the year divided by six.

Source: Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Lithuania, Accounts of the execution of the State budget within the corresponding year, as quoted in Ministry of Education and Science of The Republic of Lithuania, *Financing of Higher Education of Lithuanian in the New Millennium*, Vilnius, 2000, p. 25.

getary support for higher education. The team is seriously concerned about the adequacy of budgetary support to meet the increasing demand from qualified students, strengthen quality and retain and develop academic staff, improve the material and technical base of institutions and enhance the Republic's capacity in science.

Implementing a new financing policy

The 1991 Law on Research and Higher Education provides that state HEIs are to be financed on a "lump-sum" basis.[14] Nevertheless, this provision has not been implemented. At the time of the OECD review, state policies for financing higher education were being debated in anticipation of final action on the new Law on Higher Education. It was clear to the OECD team that the problems related to the need for not only increased state financing but a fundamental reform of the financing system. Among the issues raised in the course of the review:

- An absence of a clear long-term plan for development of science and studies – a plan that defines state priorities and addresses financing issues, including issues regarding the appropriate share of costs to be borne by students through fees.
- The development of a long-term strategy has been hampered by repeated reorganisation of the responsible state entities.

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- The State budget was developed by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) with limited consideration of the proposal from the MoES developed on the basis of information submitted to the MoES from research and HEIs.
- The methodology for determining the budgetary allocations to higher education establishments was seriously flawed and inconsistent with the concept of lump sum funding. Funds allocated to institutions were based largely on the previous year's expenditures and were made on a detailed "line-item" or "object of expenditure" basis (*e.g.* for the payment of wages, social insurance, commodities and services, scholarships, capital construction, fixed assets and other purposes). These allocations are made without relationship to institutional mission, quality assessment, or other substantive parameters. They are not based upon State goals and priorities for the higher education system, changes in the numbers of students, or differences in study programmes and the cost of studies. Not until the 2000 budget year did allocations take into consideration changes in student numbers.
- The MoF allowed limited institutional flexibility in managing the funds once they were allocated. Through its fund accounting and control processes, the MoF maintained tight control of the actual distribution of funds and made limited distinctions between higher education establishments and other State functions. Furthermore, funds were distributed to establishments on a month-by-month basis and the amount of the actual distribution could vary significantly depending on availability of State revenues in the month. Establishments had limited ability to plan or incentives to save, reallocate funding, or achieve efficiencies in the use of State resources.
- The lack of a policy and regulatory framework regarding tuition fees led to widely varying practices as higher education establishments sought to augment the limited State funding with revenue from student sources (see section on student financing).
- Because of limitations in State laws governing charitable giving and sponsorship support, few incentives existed for these sources of income for higher education establishments.
- Because the provisions of the new Higher Education Act clarifying the difference between vocational colleges and colleges within higher education had not yet been enacted, two different methodologies existed for allocation of state funding. Funds were allocated to universities through the MoF and the colleges using a separate methodology through their founding ministries (the MoES and the Ministry of Interior, Agriculture, etc.).
- There appeared to be limited sharing of resources and serious disparities in the academic support services and material base among HEIs, especially those located in the same area (*e.g.* Vilnius and Kaunas). Not only were

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there limits in the management capacity of institutions to achieve internal efficiencies, but also there appeared to be limited incentives for system efficiencies. Examples would include:

- Avoiding duplication of study programmes and opportunities for students from one institution to take courses at another nearby institution (including the potential future feasibility of using Open/distance learning to supplement and enrich an institution's offerings delivered by another Lithuanian institution).
- Joint library services and opportunities for students and researchers to make use of the library and academic services of other institutions.
- Sharing of administrative and support services.

Finance provisions in Law on Higher Education

The new Law on Higher Education establishes the legal basis for addressing many of these problems. In particular, the law makes important improvements in provisions regarding planning and co-ordination and the tie between planning, State budgetary financing and accountability.

Higher education establishments are now required to prepare their long-term development plan projects for a period of 5 years and submit them to the Ministry. The Ministry co-ordinates these plans with higher education establishments, taking into consideration the conclusions of the Higher Education Council.

The MoES is required to prepare, recommend to the Government, make public and update as necessary a long-term Lithuanian higher education system development plan, taking into account the priorities of the State, financial resources, long-term development plans submitted by higher education establishments. The plan is to include:

- The objectives and tasks of the State in the sphere of higher education:
- Prospects for updating and improving study programmes;
- A survey of the condition of higher education in Lithuania and its evaluation;
- The trends of development of higher education and HEIs;
- The planned number of students to be admitted to HEIs;
- The planned higher education establishment financing programme.

The new law provides for three-year agreements HEIs and the MoES which are to serve as a mutual understanding between the State and the establishments regarding future directions and the utilisation of State budgetary resources. The agreements are to be linked to the institution's long-range development plan and the long-range development plan of the Lithuanian higher education system as developed by the MoES and approved by the Government. The MoES is also to

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take into consideration results of the assessments of the quality of study programmes and establishments in developing the agreements. The agreements are to include information on the subject areas, number of state-funded study places, the maximum number of study places for fee paying students and information on State budgetary support and projected income from other sources.

The OECD team strongly endorses the changes envisioned in the new Law on Higher Education and recommends that the Government and MoES give highest priority to developing the specific policies necessary to implement the new provisions. There is always the danger that an excellent legal framework and concepts will never be translated into concrete actions because of the lack of effective implementation of policies and processes. The OECD team was especially impressed with the progress on implementation already underway and the support for that process by the EC-Phare Programme, "Institutional Reform of Higher Education" The OECD team recommends that Lithuania give attention to several specific issues, some of which may require refinement of the provisions of the Law on Higher Education:

- Strengthen the capacity of state institutions at the level of the Government and MoES to develop and sustain attention to the long-term development plan for the Lithuanian system of higher education (see section below) as the guiding framework for financing policy.
- Strengthen the legal basis and capacity for effective institutional management (see below) as a prerequisite for de-regulation and decentralisation and substantially increased institutional responsibility for achieving more effective and efficient use of resources – especially academic staff.
- Improve long-term planning and move away from the tight controls of "state orders" for specific numbers of professionals and technicians associated with a command economy, to a more open, flexible system relying on financial incentives and better information to achieve state goals.
- Ensure that new methodologies for allocation of state budgetary funds to institutions take into consideration the differences in:
  - the cost of study programmes;
  - Student enrolments (absolute numbers and changes in numbers);
  - institutional mission (especially the differences between universities and colleges);
  - the capacity of institutions (or study programmes within institutions) to generate non-state revenue through fees from students in non-state-paid places, contracts and grants from external sources (*e.g.* research grants or funding from social partners).

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- Establish a stronger link between state financing and state and institutional priorities by designating a percentage (1 to 5%) of State budgetary funding tied to institutional performance related to specific goals established in institutional agreements. Performance goals should relate to both the institution's long-term plan and the long-term plan for the Lithuanian higher education system. Consider introducing funding incentives for institutions with positive evaluations through the mechanisms of budget allocations. For achievements in scientific research and high quality of academic teaching and learning, institutions or individual faculties can be awarded a higher proportion of available funding.
- Ensure that financing policy provides incentives (or does not provide disincentives) for institutions to:
  - Increase the use of open/distance learning to improve the accessibility and quality of services (especially to Lithuania's adult population) and to improve the cost-effectiveness of delivery (see section on open/distance learning).
  - Avoid unnecessary duplication and collaborate in the provision of study programmes, academic support services (*e.g.* libraries), administrative services and material and technical resources. This should include incentives for students to make use of study programmes and resources of more than one institution in pursuit of their academic goals.
  - Co-ordinate changes in institutional financing policy with the development of a long-term policy framework on the sharing of the costs of higher education between the state, students and other funding sources (see below).
- Establish incentives (through tax policy and other means) for enterprises to provide financial support for students and institutions. Also, provide tax incentives for charitable and other non-governmental contributions to the financing of institutions of higher education.

Student financing[15]

The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania states that everyone shall have an equal opportunity to attain higher education according to each person's individual abilities. Article 41 of the Constitution guarantees citizens who demonstrate suitable academic progress education at establishments of higher education free of charge.[16]

The wish of young people to continue their education after leaving secondary school is clearly reflected in the rise since 1993 in the number of students paying for their education. In 1998, out of a total of 16 597 students admitted, 11 930 entered HEIs as state-financed students and 4 663 on a paid education basis.

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In 1999 more than 21% of all the students paid tuition fees (with the exception of doctoral students).

The income that HEIs derive from the tuition fees are increasing annually. According to the data of the MoES Department of Science and Higher, HEIs collected over LTL 20 million from tuition fees in 1997, 37 million in 1998 and LTL 0.7 million in 1999.

Several sources of financing are available to students:

- Since 1998 HEIs have been authorised to grant loans to daytime students to partially cover their living costs during the time of their studies. Seeking to reduce students' dissatisfaction with the tuition fees paid and to receive more income, HEIs often grant these loans to the students who pay for their education.
- Students of Lithuanian HEIs may also receive scholarship grants to partially cover their living expenses. The amount of the state funds allocated to the scholarship fund of students of HEIs varies by form and level of studies based on a percentage of the Minimum Living Standards (LTL 125 in 1999/2000):
  - 93% of the Minimum Living Standard to 75% of daytime students in universities and,
  - 86% of the Minimum Living Standard to 70% of daytime students of colleges.[17]
- In 1999, HEIs also spent 13.6% (52.6 thousand LTL) of their state budgetary allocations on scholarships (in addition to the funds designated for this purpose). The institutions establish their own policies on eligibility and the size of the grants. The distribution of these scholarships in the 1999/2000 school year were:
  - 3.7% of students of HEIs and 0.2% of students of colleges received scholarships greater than LTL 200 and
  - 58.3% of students of HEIs and 91.2% of students of colleges received scholarships smaller than LTL 125.[18]
- In the 1999/2000 school year, 30.3% of students of HEIs and 60.7% of students of colleges received social scholarships from the social support fund to 41.25 LTL. These funds are granted to the persons deriving smaller income than that supported by the state.
- The Lithuanian State Research and Higher Education Fund started to grant loans to partially cover living expenses in 1998 making use of the budgetary subsidies for that purpose. The number of these loans has increased rapidly:
  - 1998: 728 loans for a total of 2 231 thousand LTL;
  - 1999: 1 171 loans for a total of 6 370 thousand LTL;

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– 2000: 2 493 loans for a total of 6 569 thousand LTL.

The Lithuanian State Research and Higher Education Fund Loans is responsible for administering the loans programme. All the loans granted must also be repaid to the Fund and are then available for new loans. State subsidies for the Fund will be needed for several years. Once the volume of loan repayment increases, the Fund could increase the number and size of loans being granted without increasing annual state subsidies for these loans.

The new Law on Higher Education includes provisions on student financing intended to provide a legal framework and makes an important distinction between two types of costs:

- The cost of scientific research and activities not directly linked to study organising and services. These are to be funded separately in the State budget. (Article 57).
- The cost of studies, including funds required for organising studies and maintaining the scientific level of these studies (according to the field, stage and form of studies) (Article 59).

The law defines various forms of support including students accepted to state-funded positions, loans to students who are paying for their own studies, loans to help pay living expenses, scholarship grants and other social assistance. The law provides that students accepted to state-funded positions are to receive a state loan corresponding to the cost of studies. A student accepted in a state-funded position enters into a tripartite agreement with the higher education establishment and the Lithuanian State Fund for Science and Studies. Good students in positions funded by the state, who have fulfilled the requirements of the study programmes, are to be excused for repayment of the loan. Students who fail to meet these requirements are to be removed from the list of students in state-funded study positions.

Although there are many forms of support for students, the actual level remains limited – especially when compared with increasing costs of living and student fees.

- Over half of the students of state HEIs and almost all the students of colleges receive scholarships, but the size of the scholarship does not allow the student to cover his/her living expenses.
- Loans through Lithuanian State Research and Higher Education Fund provide up to LTL 375 per month, but less than 1.5% of students in Lithuania can obtain them.
- The possibilities for enterprises to award scholarships to students are limited by the fact that such scholarships are treated as payments to students and are subject to income tax.

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The appearance of students paying for their studies is a new social phenomenon for Lithuania; it has stirred up a great deal of discussion at different levels, especially with regard to the rights of young people to equal educational opportunities. The OECD team recognises the highly sensitive nature of the issue in Lithuania, especially in light of the Constitutional provisions regarding free higher education. Because the team did not analyse this issue in detail, it could not make definitive recommendations. Nevertheless, from an international comparative perspective, several points are important for future policy development in Lithuania.

First, the trend toward shifting the burden of paying the costs of higher education to students and parents from governments is a phenomenon world-wide – and a strong trend in Estonia and Latvia.[19] The reasons for this change are unique to each country, but the most common reasons, especially in countries in Eastern and Central Europe, include:

- Declining (often in real terms) state support for higher education, resulting from the overall state of the economy, demands of other public priorities (*e.g.* preparation for EU Accession, defence priorities, etc.) and still-developing tax policies.
- Increasing demand for higher education as the countries move from elite to mass higher education systems and as other sectors of the economy increasingly demand services from higher education. Students and parents increasingly recognise that post-secondary education is essential for success in the labour market and, in an often-unstable environment, a university credential provides a measure of security.
- Increasing costs per student especially as countries seek to increase the competitive level of salaries of academic staff, develop libraries and scientific and technological infrastructure essential for the quality of a modern HEI.

The consequence of these trends is that state funding is unable to keep up with the increasing demand for state-funded student places and the related support for student cost-of-living and social support. A failure to develop alternative non-state sources of financing will mean steadily worsening austerity with dire consequences for students, higher education establishments and the future economic well being of countries.

A number of other countries have Constitutional guarantees or long traditions of free higher education for students meeting certain quality standards (*e.g.* passing maturity examinations at the conclusion of upper-secondary education). As the demand for free state-funded places increases beyond the capacity of the state to pay for them, these countries face a difficult choice. Without additional non-state revenue, they must either restrict the number of students entering higher education thereby severely limiting access and opportunity for qualified students, or admitting

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more students at reduced rates of subsidy, thereby maintaining access but to increasingly shabby and under-funded universities.

The situation observed by the OECD in Lithuania is similar to these other countries. The pattern is for student fees to evolve on a largely *ad hoc* basis as institutions seek revenue to sustain and improve quality but without an overarching public policy regarding how the costs of higher education should be shared between the state, students and other sources of financing. Specific developments include:

- Increasing numbers of fee-paying students with wide disparities in fees among institutions and study programmes resulting in potential equity problems for numbers of students and significant differences in the ability of establishments and study programmes to obtain additional revenue to maintain quality.
- A mismatch between the number and types of state-funded study places and state priorities or the needs of the changing economy.
- Development of new loan and scholarship schemes available to students to off-set living expenses and, in some cases, to accommodate for a phasing out of state-funded student stipends, but often these programmes are too new and underdeveloped to off-set the consequences of fee increases.
- Developing questions about access and opportunity for qualified students from rural areas, economically disadvantaged families and other difficult circumstances.

As indicated above, the new Law on Higher Education seeks to address some of these issues. Nevertheless, at the time of the OECD review, it was clear that many of the most important issues remained unresolved. As indicated above, participation in higher education in Lithuania is lower than many other countries and demand has been increasing more slowly. Recent trends suggest that demand is now accelerating. Development of the new college sector will also contribute to this rise – as well as increase the pressure on limited resources. The OECD team therefore recommends that Lithuania place the highest priority on developing a long-range plan – as an element of the long-range development plan required by the Law on Higher Education – for student financing. Among other points, the plan should:

- Establish long-term goals regarding access and opportunity for all qualified students in Lithuania.
- Establish the policies, consistent with the Constitution, to guide the sharing of the cost of higher education between the state, students and their parents and other sources.

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- Set forth strategies for ensuring that qualified students are not denied access to higher education because of economic status, geographic (*e.g.* rural areas) or other disadvantaged conditions.

Quality assessment and accountability

The quality assurance of higher education studies has become a priority for Lithuania during the past decade. With the newly acquired autonomy and in response to the demands of prospective students, many HEIs have started to offer new study programmes in fields of high interest: law, economics, management, computer science and others. In difficult economic times, the main interest of institutions was to attract more finances from the tuition fees collected. In many cases, new, attractive programmes have been offered in absence of sufficient number of the HEI's own lecturing staff, special literature in the library and other necessary prerequisites for successful studies. The principal lecturers have been professors from other universities, or scientists from research institutes. In some institutions, no research has been done in these new fields. It is quite clear that under such conditions the quality of studies cannot be satisfactory. Another driving force in expanding the number of study programmes in high-demand fields has been the wish of some HEIs to diversify their range of programmes and to move away from the narrow specialisation inherited from Soviet times.

Much has been achieved during the past decade in modernising the content and structure of higher education studies in Lithuania. Nevertheless, the OECD review team recommends that Lithuania consider possibilities for further progress in achieving the highest international standards in university studies:

- Further streamlining of curricula, with the principal aim of reducing the overall number of courses, especially the great number of smaller, very specialised courses that are now typical for a number of study programmes.
- Reducing the teaching loads for both students and teachers, in order to provide more room for individual work, project development and research activities and further harmonising curricula with international standards in various fields of studies, and developing new inter-disciplinary programmes and courses.
- Improving the training process by broader introduction of interactive forms of studies, with special emphasis on individual students' work; and concentrating the learning process on developing students' ability to creatively apply their newly acquired knowledge.
- Using information technologies more broadly in all stages of the training process, to improve students' competence and preparedness for the challenges of their future careers.

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- Improving the system of assessment of student knowledge and competence by making more use of written examinations as a more objective form of assessing progress. Further development of examination methods and content is needed, in order to assess not only a student's knowledge but also his/her ability to apply it in creative ways.
- Introducing more research elements in the study process.
- Ensuring that courses in the humanities and social sciences are an integral part of study programmes irrespective of the main field of study. The philosophy of a "liberal education" will widen the horizons of students; in the present-day working environment, this is a necessity.
- Improving the conditions under which studies take place, in spite of severe financial constraints. Special government programmes, international projects, links with business partners and, as stressed above under financing, increased institutional collaboration, can be developed to achieve progress. The creation of a modern ICT network is essential for all HEIs.

Until the mid-1990s, there were no mechanisms (beyond the internal policies of the respective institutions) to control the quality of higher education study programmes in Lithuania. In 1996, the Minister of Education and Science approved a set of "Rules of Quality Assessment for Institutions of Research and Higher Education". This document outlines a number of procedures and rules for assessment of study programmes, assessment of research activities and general institutional evaluation. It is structured along the accepted practice in North American and many European countries, but reflects also the specifics of conditions in Lithuania.

A Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education was established in 1997 and is now active. Quality reviews are based on internal quality assessment (self-study) and external assessment by peer reviewers. Procedures for registration, evaluation and accreditation of study programmes are included in the new Law on Higher Education; the team anticipates that the system for quality assurance will gain a more solid status, now that it is part of the legislative framework for higher education.

The development of the legal and regulatory basis for quality assurance in higher education is an important achievement. The work of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education has already influenced positively the policy and practices of most HEIs. The intention of the MoES and of the Centre, is to involve experts from other countries in the evaluation process. The realisation of these plans will further strengthen the quality of studies and will contribute to the international recognition of degrees.

The new Law on Higher Education includes detailed provisions on the types, levels, and forms of study programmes, subject areas, the value and duration of studies and other requirements for study programmes. The law provides that study programmes are to be registered with the Register of Studies and Training

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Programmes. It also requires that study programmes be periodically assessed by "a study institution" authorised by the Government. These assessments are to be "publicly announced" and the MoES is to take them into consideration when it concludes agreements with higher education establishments.

The OECD review was impressed by the steps being taken for the orderly transition of institutions to the status of colleges, as described earlier in this chapter. As emphasised in that section, it will be important in the quality assurance/ accreditation processes to ensure both a degree of insulation of the colleges from the universities as well as essential co-ordination between the sectors in areas where common quality standards are essential.

Despite the progress over the past decade, in the longer perspective, the very centralised system of approval, registration and assessment of academic programmes – even as outlined in the new Law on Higher Education – may create problems. It is understandable that, at present, the MoES's and other state agencies' main focus of attention is on guaranteeing the quality of study programmes, but there are ways of combining the necessity for stricter control of studies with more open and flexible regulations for the establishment of new academic programmes. The centralised and strictly controlled register of study programmes is inflexible and may become a barrier for initiatives of institutions to offer new academic programmes. The practice of most OECD Member countries in quality assurance is the general evaluation of institutions and their accreditation. This evaluation process involves, of course, a critical review of academic programmes and individual courses; however, the institutions have the possibility to respond quickly to demands and market needs and open new programmes without lengthy and cumbersome procedures. Also, introducing subject (or field-of-study) assessment, rather than individual programme evaluations, would help. If a faculty is assessed positively for studies and research activities in a particular discipline, the same institution will automatically be granted the right to develop and offer new academic programmes in a narrower field or jointly with other faculties in interdisciplinary subjects.

The provision of the Law on Higher Education for agreements with HEIs provides a framework for more decentralised responsibility for quality assessment at the level of the whole institution as opposed to the individual study programme. The agreements will also provide an important link between quality assessment and institutional performance, on one hand and the allocation of state budgetary funding, on the other. As emphasised in the earlier discussion of financing, the introduction of funding incentives for institutions with highly positive evaluations through the mechanisms of budget allocations could also be considered by the responsible institutions in Lithuania. For achievements in scientific research and high quality of academic teaching and learning, institutions or individual faculties can be awarded a higher proportion of available funding. Strengthening the responsibility and accountability of key university bodies – university senates and

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college academic councils, university and college councils, and most importantly, rectors and college directors – will be an essential prerequisite to improved, flexible quality assessment and assurance.

The OECD team recommends that Lithuania develop a more flexible, decentralised system of quality assessment and assurance balanced by continuation – and strengthening – of effective state quality assessment and quality assurance functions. By not being consumed by the details of registration of programmes and overseeing the quality of individual study programmes, the MoES Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education and other state entities with quality assurance responsibilities can give more attention to functions such as:

- Monitoring the performance of the higher education system as a whole.
- Quality assurance on the establishment of new institutions or major changes in institutional missions (such as a change from college to university), significant changes in institutional profiles that would unnecessarily duplicate existing programmes or have major state budgetary implications.
- Overseeing the institutional accreditation process, emphasising holding institutions accountable for internal quality assessment across all study programmes and other dimensions of university and college mission.
- Overseeing the periodic auditing of quality in fields of study – within individual institutions and across institutions that offer the same programmes.
- Ensuring public accountability and transparency in all quality assurance processes.
- Linking the results of quality assessment and accreditation to state funding through state agreements with each institution.
- Developing new quality assurance policies for open/distance learning and other new modes of higher education delivery.

As emphasised in the following section of this chapter, the OECD team was impressed with the developments in Lithuania regarding open/distance learning. The team strongly supports Lithuania's intent to expand open/distance learning and other initiatives to improve access and opportunity making use of ICT and new modes of teaching and learning. Nevertheless, the team is concerned that Lithuania must make further changes in the underlying policies that will be necessary to move open/distance learning – and the whole far broader commitment to lifelong learning – from the periphery to the core of the university and other institutions. The new Law on Higher Education, for example, makes no distinction between distance education delivery modes and traditional teaching formats. The basic quality assurance policies and regulations for institutional accreditation are strongly oriented to traditional institutions and modes of delivery and will be of

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limited use either in preventing serious abuse or promoting the highest quality new initiatives.

The OECD recommends that Lithuania make a thorough review of all State laws, regulations and other policies related to quality assurance in higher education to identify changes that will create the policy environment necessary to make open/distance learning and lifelong learning a reality, not just a vision. Such a review is also important to ensure that basic policies are in place to prevent serious abuse as new ICT-based modes of delivery expand (see following section for detailed recommendations).

A concern of the OECD team at the time of the review was that there should be greater transparency and public reporting in the quality assessment/assurance processes in Lithuania. The team, therefore, strongly supports the provisions of the new Law on Higher Education that require public reporting. The OECD team remains concerned, however, that despite the new formal requirements, the university quality assessment/accreditation processes and results are still not – in practice – fully available to the public. Full transparency of all quality assessment/accreditation processes in higher education all levels from colleges to universities in order to ensure essential public accountability is important and should include annual reports to the public by each institution on performance, including the results of quality assessments undertaken in the previous year and other appropriate performance indicators.

Distance Learning in higher education

Lithuania, like most other republics formerly under the rule of the USSR, inherited its version of extra-mural or correspondence education from the centralised Soviet education system. This system was characterised by blocks of on-campus attendance, printed material to be worked on at home and assessment mainly by oral examinations. It largely depended on adults being released by State enterprises for compulsory on-campus attendance, on being paid during that attendance and on being supported financially for accommodation during it. The learning materials tended to be collections of readings with little in the way of instructional design, learner guidance or interactivity. In general, qualifications gained via these courses were less well regarded than those gained from full on-campus attendance.

Such a system does not sit well with Lithuania's move to a market economy. Students find increasing difficulties in meeting the face to face attendance requirements of "correspondence" courses and at the same time keeping their jobs. Private enterprise employers in general either cannot afford to lose their employees for such large amounts of time or else are simply unwilling to.

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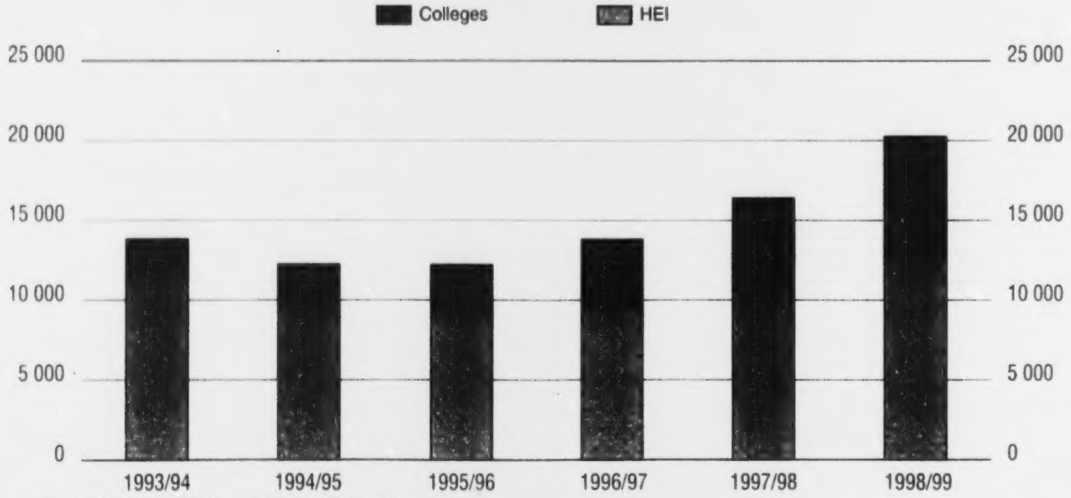
Lithuania well recognises the inappropriateness of this legacy for its present needs. It is doing all it can to improve the quality of its services in this area. Nevertheless, large numbers of working adult students, around 20% of the total undergraduate population, pursue their undergraduate studies via correspondence courses and for a significant proportion they still do it in the Soviet style. University staff and faculty involved freely admitted to the review team their unhappiness with the quality of learning material they were still using. The main solution proposed, however, tends to be to simply increase the amount of face-to-face interaction.

There is an increasing demand for correspondence courses in Lithuania. Figure 20 shows the numbers of Lithuanian students studying by correspondence at universities or colleges (including agricultural colleges). 279 of the 1998/99 group are studying for their Masters' degrees. Vilnius University, Lithuania's premier university, has 3 260 of its 11 665 students pursuing studies by correspondence or evening classes.

Concurrently, Lithuania recognises the potential of modern forms of open/distance learning (ODL) and has made some progress towards setting up an infrastructure for delivery of education courses via distance methodologies. The State has invested in the development of an infrastructure to enable the delivery of ODL courses via video-conferencing. Centred on Kaunas University of Technology, the network has linked Kaunas, Vilnius, Klaipeda, Siauliau and Panevezys. LITNET

Figure 20. **Number of students in Lithuanian universities and colleges studying by correspondence**



Source: Ministry of Education and Science.

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(Lithuanian Academic and Research Network) and five universities participated in this project. Future plans have been approved to extend the network to Utena and Marijampole giving good coverage to the whole country; however, lack of financial resources may mean some delay in implementation.

A catalyst to distance education development has undoubtedly been the EC-Phare Multi-country Programme for Distance Education, in which Lithuania and 12 other countries have participated. This programme promotes the use of ODL as an integral part of the reforms of post secondary education and training in Central and Eastern Europe. Under this project, Lithuania established the Lithuania Distance Education Centre (LDEC) as the national contact point. In the first year (1995), two distance education study centres (Vilnius University and Kaunas University of Technology) and three student support centres were set up. The focus has since shifted to the development of learning materials, including educational software and the training of teachers and trainers.

Lithuania participated fully in this project and benefited greatly. Not only has the project contributed to putting in place well equipped key centres on which to base an ODL network, but also the establishment of the LDEC has provided a focal point for spearheading future open and distance learning developments in Lithuania beyond the duration of the EC-Phare project. Importantly too, the project has provided the means to mount an effective public relations campaign to help promote the image of distance education and improve the general public's perception of its value.

Under the project, Lithuanian educators participated in the development of seven of the 27 course module development projects, all of key importance to the 13 countries involved. Candidus (Training of Candidates for Headmaster Positions) and AGRIPO (Agriculture and Pollution) are two that between them cover a range of delivery media: web, CD-ROM, print-based materials and tutorials. This participation in trans-national software development has resulted in the growth of expertise in learning materials (including software) development.

The project also funded training for teachers in distance education using the Learning about Open Learning (LOLA) Train the Trainer programme. This excellent programme, specially developed to train open and distance learning educators in Central and Eastern Europe, will remain a very useful training tool for some years especially if funds can be found to translate it into Lithuanian. The Kaunas Regional Distance Education Study Centre has excellent video conferencing facilities and is conducting a range of useful courses via this medium, including a much-needed pedagogical studies programme for teachers of vocational schools.[20]

The Lithuanian government has worked with and supported the EC-Phare programme initiatives with additional funding, legislation and infrastructure development as described above. Individual universities too, in particular Kaunas

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University of Technology, have also contributed. The Faculty of Economics at Vilnius University is already running Internet and CD-ROM-based ODL courses. The Vilnius University Distance Education Study Centre is currently working with faculties to develop others. The Open Society has long supported the development of ICT in Lithuania and has been generous in its provision of equipment and expertise.

The MoES in 1996 established a Board for Distance Education. This is an advisory, supervisory and highly representative body reporting directly to the Minister on distance education policy. The Board has a number of expert groups for various ODL studies and in 1999 appointed a working group to formulate a national strategy for further development of distance education in Lithuania. The work of this group has resulted in the creation of Guidelines for Further Development of Distance Education in Lithuania that was undergoing the process of ministerial approval at the time of the review.

The result of all this activity is that Lithuania is equipped with a good framework on which to build a sound open and distance learning system with a Board at the national level to deal with policy issues. Plans are in place to build a basic infrastructure appropriate to the Republic's size (with some parts already in place). The country has the learning materials and software design expertise, access to a good teacher and administrator training course (LOLA) and excellent academic and ministerial leadership. There are, however, some problems to address and some fine-tuning to carry out. The OECD recommends that Lithuania:

- Make ODL an integral element of the long-term development plan for the Lithuanian higher education system.
- Require pedagogical universities (through state agreements, performance requirements for receiving state budgetary support) to recognise that distance education and autonomous learning methodologies will become essential for teachers of tomorrow's schools, vocational and HEIs. These institutions must provide appropriate pre-service and in-service courses. In-service training must be recurrent to keep teachers up-to-date.
- Include the newly developing colleges and institutions within the Vocational Education and Training sector in the MoES plans for ODL. These institutions have not been included to date in any of the large developmental projects in distance education.
- Translate into Lithuanian the in-service course Learning about Open Learning (LOLA), this would be a cost-effective way of providing training for distance education workers.
- Change financing policy to provide incentives for HEIs to expand and increase the quality of ODL. Universities are given less state funding for distance students than for on campus students. The percentage has increased

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recently to 50%. This is certainly not an incentive for universities to foster distance modes of delivery, or to expend much energy in raising its quality.

- Revise existing correspondence courses in the light of the new expertise now available in the country. These courses do not need to be abandoned, but they should become more flexible and less demanding of on-campus attendance. Where the Soviet model is still operating, it should be replaced by course structures that are more in line with the current needs of adult students.
- Bring correspondence courses under the generic umbrella of open and distance education rather than continue to treat these courses as something different and less valuable.
- Replace oral examinations, where the discipline allows, by written examinations. This would cover students from a wider spread of locations to undertake courses of choice from a range of universities throughout the country. (Lithuania's population is more evenly spread across the country than is Latvia's or Estonia's.)
- Implement plans for the extension of the existing network to Utena and Marijampole as soon as funding allows.
- Place a high priority on developing and implementing a quality control mechanism for ODL courses. The evaluation of undergraduate courses is the responsibility of the Centre for Quality Assessment, set up in 1995. On visiting the centre, the review team found no current or future plans in place for evaluation of any courses that were currently being delivered by correspondence or distance modes. Where course content will be covered by evaluation of the equivalent on-campus course, there is a further need to ensure that the special components of open and distance learning courses are also considered. Evaluation of open and distance learning courses needs to include the following:
  - Quality of open and distance learning materials.
  - Existence and clarity of course objectives.
  - Appropriateness of the media mix selected.
  - Reliability of the assessment tools.
  - Efficiency of the course administration including assessment arrangements.
  - Quality of the interactivity mechanisms.
  - Degree of facilitation to enable individual study.
  - Adequacy of student support arrangements.
- Develop undergraduate open and distance learning courses for whole programmes, using the expertise developed through participation in the EC-Phare

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project. At present the EC-Phare programme has encouraged development of model courses in a wide range of disciplines, but no whole multi-stage programmes have been developed.

Unfortunately, the most difficult problem for Lithuania to solve is funding for sustainability as various international support programmes come to an end. There is a great danger of losing the momentum of the good work done in ODL through budgetary pressures on the educational budget. The OECD team therefore recommends that in the State budgetary process explicit provision be made for sustaining funding for those international support and demonstration initiatives that are critical to the accomplishment of the long-term development plan for Lithuanian higher education.

Governance and management of higher education establishments

The new law defines higher education autonomy and extends autonomy to all establishments, including colleges. It also defines the governing structures of universities and colleges and the relationship of these establishments to the State. While there are similarities for colleges and universities in structures and relationships, universities are granted more autonomy in a number of important respects. For example:

- Both universities and colleges have supreme bodies for academic self-government: the senate for universities and the academic council for colleges. University senates have authority – without approval of the MoES – to "consider and approve study programmes, programmes concerning research and the development thereof, as well as structural changes necessary for the implementation of such programmes, taking into consideration proposals of the university council". The college academic councils, in contrast, must present study programmes to the MoES for approval.
- Both universities and colleges have councils to be the "public supervision and care body" of the establishment. The university senates and college academic councils appoint one-third of the members, one-third are appointed by consensus with the university rector or college director and one-third are appointed by the Minister of Education and Science from persons who are not university or college employees. The functions of the councils are similar at both universities and colleges, but differ primarily on appointment of the rector and college director. The university council has no role in the appointment of the rector, who is elected by the university senate, but the college council appoints the college director.
- State universities may only be established or reorganised by the *Seimas*, on the advice of the Government. The Government, on the advice of the MoES, may establish state colleges. A university may establish a college within its

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governing authority on the joint advice of the MoES and the university and only with the consent of the university council.

- Colleges are to be involved in preparing specialists of practical orientation, capable of working separately of education, culture, economy and other spheres. The college may award professional qualifications only upon receiving the authorisation of the MoES.

As mentioned above, the new law requires HEIs to prepare their long-term development plan projects for a period of 5 years and submit them to the Ministry. The Ministry co-ordinates these plans with higher education establishments, taking into consideration the conclusions of the Higher Education Council. The new law also provides for three-year agreements between HEIs and the MoES which are to serve as a mutual understanding between the State and the establishments regarding future directions and the utilisation of State budgetary resources. The agreements are to be linked to the institution's long-range development plan and the long-range development plan for the Lithuanian higher education system as developed by the MoES and approved by the Government. The MoES is also to take into consideration results of the assessments of the quality of study programmes and establishments in developing the agreements. The agreements are to include information on the subject areas at the establishment, number of state-funded study places, the maximum number of study places for fee paying students and information on State budgetary support and projected income from other sources.

From the perspective of the OECD team, both institutional autonomy and public accountability are essential characteristics of a strong higher education system. It is important that institutions have the independence and flexibility to function within the rapidly changing environment. At the same time, it is important that state establishments and non-state establishments receiving state subsidy be accountable to the public and responsive to state priorities.

The review team finds the provisions in the new Law on Higher Education for agreements between HEIs and the MoES to be consistent with the latest developments in OECD countries. These agreements provide an excellent means to link planning, resource allocation and evaluation/assessment. As mutually developed documents, the agreements provide a basis for shared understanding of needs and expectations between the state and the establishments.

The OECD team also strongly endorses the formation of university and college councils with representation from persons appointed by the MoES not employed at the establishments. As indicated below, student representation on the councils is also a positive development. Nevertheless, the OECD team is concerned that, from an international comparative perspective, the provisions related to university governance and management do not provide for sufficient public

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accountability or an adequate foundation for sound university management. For example, the Law on Higher Education as enacted in March 2000 eliminated two provisions in the 1999 version that appeared to the OECD team to be important both to external accountability and to internal management.

The new law does not provide for involvement of the university councils in the process of electing rectors and does not require that university rectors assume their positions with the concurrence of the President of the Republic and therefore no external check on this process is provided to ensure public accountability. In contrast, an external review by the MoES is required for the appointment of college directors as proposed in the earlier draft. The OECD team supports the principle of university autonomy, but believes that autonomy must be balanced by public accountability. The team recommends that Lithuania amend the Law on Higher Education to provide for involvement of the university councils in the election of rectors. The law should also require the concurrence of the President of the Republic with the election of rectors to ensure that the position of university rector is fully accountable to the public.

The new law specifies that "only a scientist or a distinguished artist possessing the title of professor may participate in the competition to hold the office of a rector".[21] In contrast, the May 1999 draft provided that a professor with the management experience could take the position of university rector and a scholar with the pedagogical and management work experience could take the position of college director.

These and other changes made between earlier drafts and the final Law on Higher Education reflect a shift back to the most conservative forms of governance historically found in Continental universities. The rapidly changing higher education environment and demands for public accountability require that universities be well managed. Rectors must have the management experience and authority to effect significant improvements in the university. The experience in OECD countries underscores that university rectors must be able – with, of course, the appropriate consultation with the university council and university senate – to make difficult decisions about allocation and reallocation of university resources to meet university and state priorities. The OECD team, therefore, recommends that the Law on Higher Education be amended to add the language eliminated from previous drafts, which emphasises that rectors should have management experience. The provisions from the May 1999 draft that indicate that college directors may be scholars with the pedagogical and management work experience should also be included in the Law on Higher Education.

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State co-ordination, long-term planning and state leadership structures

The OECD recognises that the provisions of the 2000 Law on Education sought to clarify the responsibilities of key state entities, but the team remains concerned that ambiguities continue to exist.

From the perspective of the best practice in OECD countries, two aspects of Lithuania's leadership structures for higher education are insufficiently developed at present.

First, most OECD countries recognise that it is increasingly important to provide for extensive involvement of persons from outside the higher education system (*e.g.* social partners, leaders from general secondary education and other social sectors) in shaping a long-term higher education system development plan. This involvement is essential for public accountability and to ensure links between higher education and the major social and economic issues facing the country. The new law provides for involvement of external constituencies at the level of university and college councils, however, it is unclear how such involvement is to be achieved in the current Lithuanian structure at the level of the *Seimas*, Government and MoES. Most of the principal entities (such as the Rectors' Conference and the Lithuanian Science Council) include persons from within higher education and science and not persons who are representative of society at large. The new law does not define the composition of the Higher Education Council, but even if this entity may include persons external to higher education, it appears to have only a limited advisory role. The OECD team recommends that Lithuania provide for stronger involvement at the highest levels of policy-making of persons who do not have direct interests in higher education and who could represent the public interest in shaping the long-term development plan and other important policy matters.

A second concern relates to the co-ordination of higher education across the Government, but especially between the MoES and the Ministry of Finance. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the OECD observed a degree of misalignment between the underlying philosophy and long-term priorities as developed by the MoES, on one hand and the philosophy and implementation at the Ministry of Finance, on the other. As in OECD countries, the Ministry of Finance plays a major role in setting the policy directions for higher education through the State budget and decisions on resource allocation and fiscal accountability. Best practice in OECD countries is for the substantive goals and strategies in the state's long-term development plan as developed by the Ministry of Education and other consultative bodies in higher education to guide financing policy as developed by the Ministry of Finance. Of course, if a country does not have an explicit plan or strategy, the budget and financing policies as implemented by the Ministry of Finance will be the implicit plan or strategy. The OECD team sensed that in Lithuania, the

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Ministry of Finance is pursuing its own set of policies and priorities and that these are not guided to an appropriate degree by the substantive policies as developed by the MoES. The OECD team therefore recommends that Lithuania make explicit – and enforce – the connection between long-term planning carried out by the MoES and approved by the Government and the policies and actions of the Ministry of Finance.

Finally, the OECD recommends that Lithuania develop a mechanism to ensure sustained attention to the long-term development plan for higher education – and for sustaining education reform as whole – over a multiyear period as governments and as other external conditions change. Repeated changes in responsible institutions at the state level over the past decade have weakened the capacity of Lithuania to pursue a consistent set of actions to strengthen its higher education system. Universities are conservative institutions and require many years to change. As an external group, the OECD review team cannot recommend precisely how this recommendation could be implemented in Lithuania. However, criteria for such a mechanism might include:

- Location at the highest level of the state (presumably at the level of the President of the Republic).
- A majority participation of leaders representing Lithuanian society, social partners and others who are from outside higher education and science.
- A focus on the link between a strong higher education system and the future of the Republic of Lithuania – its strength as an independent, democratic state, the quality of life of all the population and the strength and competitive position of the Republic's economy.
- Effective co-ordination, if not integration with, long-term planning and development for the whole education system from pre-school through lifelong learning.
- Long-term (10 to 15 year) goals, with clear benchmarks for measuring and reporting to the public on progress toward these goals.

Research in higher education institutions

General overview

By tradition, but also according to current legislation, all HEIs in Lithuania carry out research activities. The government decree on Regulations for the Establishment and Assessment of Higher Education Institutions states: "The research or artistic activities of an institution of higher education must be sufficient to maintain the level of research (artistic) qualification of the academic staff, as well as the unity of higher education and research (creative work). The research (creative)

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activities corresponding to the field (trend) of doctoral or master's studies must be systematic and productive and both the lecturers and the students must participate therein."

The integration of studies and research activities is considered central for university-level studies in Lithuania; education for Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degrees can be of the necessary quality only if the lecturing staff is itself actively involved in research. Promotions of academic staff are based largely on achievements in research. These principles are in harmony with the traditions of other European university systems. Research in HEIs is also considered a strategic national resource for progress in the economic sector and in society in general.

In order to assess the place of higher education in research and development (R&D) activities in Lithuania, it is of interest to follow the country's general trends in R&D development during the past several years. Table 52 sets out the expenditure on R&D and its share of GDP for the period 1995/1998.

Changes in trend can also be seen from Figure 21. In Tables 53 and Figure 22 the expenditures by sectors in 1998 are presented.

The data presented in Tables 53 and 54 as well as in Figures 21 and 22 reveal a gradual increase in the funding of R&D activities in Lithuania during the past four years. It is significant that not only the absolute funding has improved, but that the share of GDP allocated to research and development has also increased from 0.48% of GDP in 1995 to 0.57% in 1998.

The relative share of basic research has been reduced by several points, while the share of applied research has increased. Though these changes are not very big, the trend reflects the country's greater need for applied research. Funding appears to be linked to the overall priorities for the development of Lithuania's economy and society. The greater emphasis on applied research in HEIs is substantiated in the documents outlining the reforms in the higher

Table 52. **Expenditure on R&D in Lithuania and its share in percentage of gross domestic product (GDP)**

	1995	1996	1997	1998
Total expenditure, (000 LTL) of which for: (%)	114 918.4	164 865.4	217 223.7	244 494.4
basic research	52.6	39.5	41.1	46.6
applied research	39.6	41.6	44.1	43.3
experimental development	7.8	18.9	14.8	10.1
Expenditure on R&D as a percentage of GDP	**0.48**	**0.52**	**0.57**	**0.57**

Source: Research activities, Publication B364, Department of Statistics, Vilnius, 1999.

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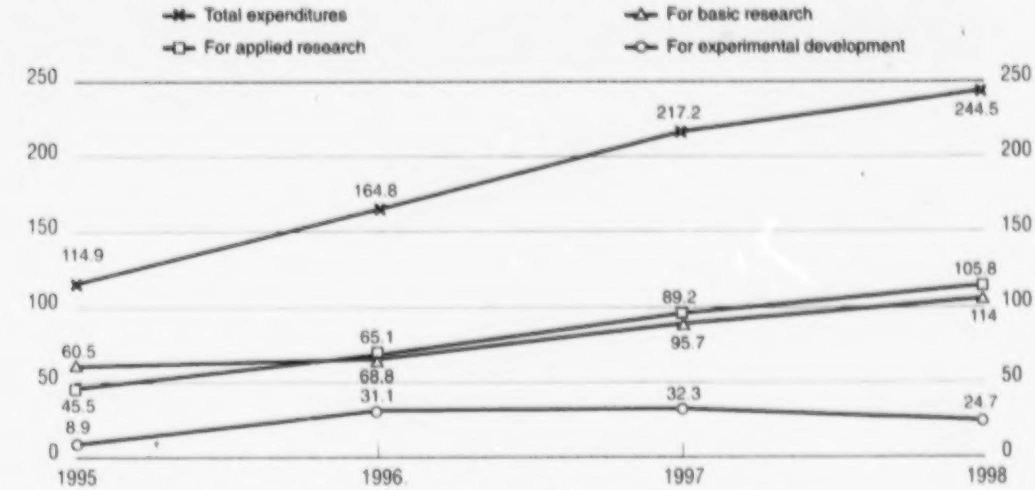
Figure 21. **Expenditures by sector, 1998**



Source: *Research activities*, Publication B364, Department of Statistics, Vilnius, 1999.

education sector.[22] It should be underlined here that the emphasis on applied research is more clearly expressed in the higher education sector than in the state research institutes (Table 52).

The percentage expenditure on R&D in sectors by field of sciences is presented in Table 53. The data shows that research in HEIs forms an important part of the national R&D sector. In 1997, the overall funding for research in Lithuania was at 2.6% of total budget allocations, or 0.57% of gross domestic product (GDP). The respective figures for HEIs are 6.8-7.5 of state budget and approximately 0.96% of

Table 53. **Expenditure on R&D in Lithuania and its share by sector in percentage of GDP, 1998**

	Higher education sector	Government sector	Business enterprises sector	Private non-profit sector
Total expenditure, (000 LTL)				
of which for: (%)	94 677.8	144 189.7	4 704.8	922.1
Basic research	32.2	57.3	–	92.0
Applied research	57.9	34.6	25	1.5
Experimental development	9.9	8.1	75	6.5
Expenditure on R&D in percentage of GDP	0.22	0.34	0.01	0.002

Source: *Research activities*, Publication B364, Department of Statistics, Vilnius, 1999.

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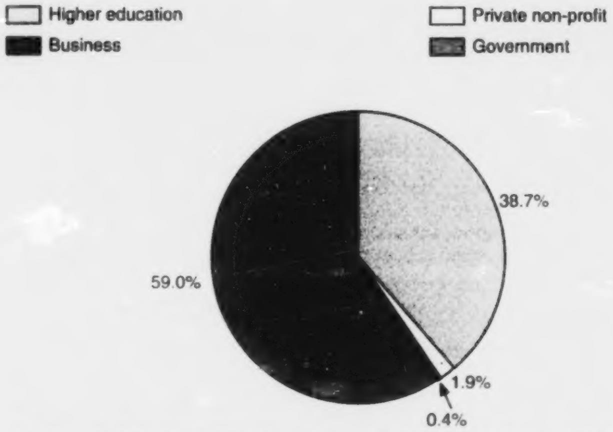
Figure 22. **Distribution of expenditures on R&D by sectors, 1998**



Source: *Research activities*, Publication B364, Department of Statistics, Vilnius, 1999.

GDP. A greater proportion of budget allocations for research goes outside the higher education sector, mostly to the network of state research institutes. It should be emphasised, however, that a considerable part of expenditure for state research institutes is directed to cover the costs of salaries, social security and utilities.

The percentage of GDP allocated to research in different countries is presented in Figure 23; the proportion of budget allocations for funding research in HEIs in different countries is given in Figure 24.

Table 54. **Expenditure on R&D in Lithuania in sectors by field of science in 1998, Percentages**

	Higher education sector	Government sector	Business enterprises sector	Private non-profit sector
Total	100	100	100	100
Humanities	13.5	10.3	–	93.3
Social sciences	14.3	10.5	1.7	3.3
Technological sciences	21.4	23.0	79.7	–
Physical sciences	10.9	21.7	0.2	3.3
Biomedical sciences	39.9	34.5	18.4	0.1
of which				
Agriculture sciences	17.7	45.6	1.1	–
Natural sciences	22.4	40.2	83.4	100
Medical sciences	59.9	14.2	15.5	–

Source: *Research activities*, Publication B364, Department of Statistics, Vilnius, 1999.

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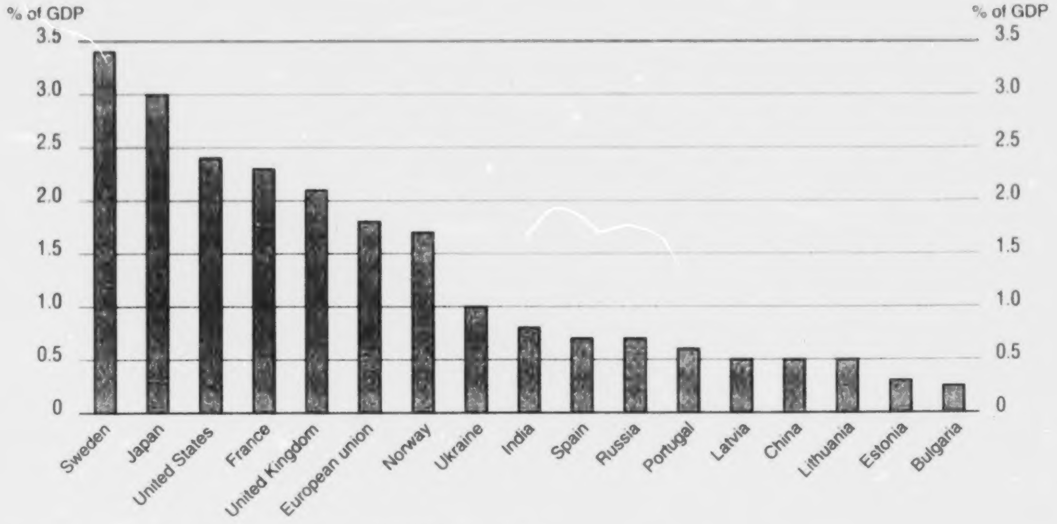
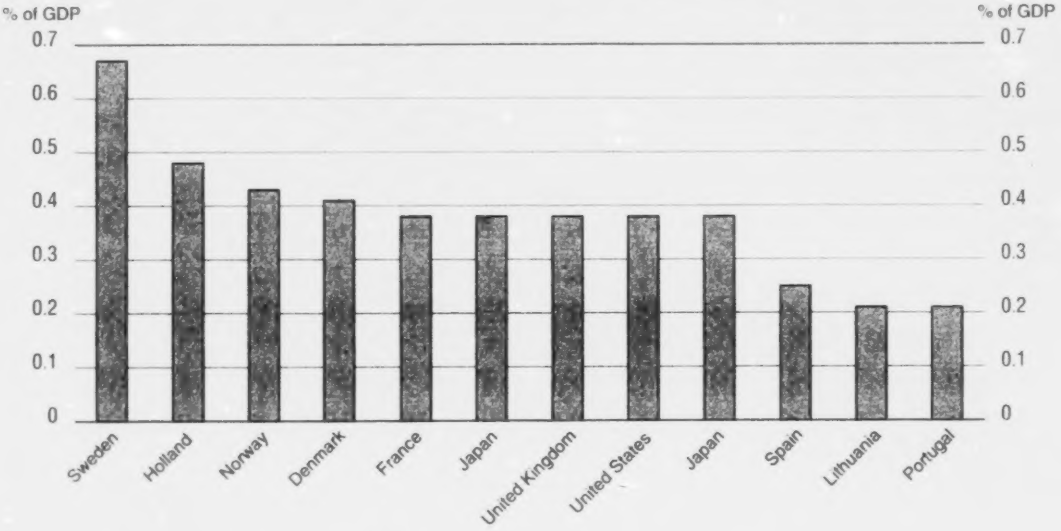
Figure 23. **Percentage of GDP allocated to research activities in different countries, 1995**



Source: *World Science Report*, UNESCO Publishing, 1998.

Figure 24. **Percentage of GDP allocated to research activities in higher education institutions in different countries in 1994**



Source: *World Science Report*, UNESCO Publishing, 1998.

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These data show that currently the state provides insufficient funds for R&D activities. This is evidently linked to the financial constraints and difficulties of the transition period; however, the danger is that after a prolonged period of sparse funding, the sector may reach a level of impoverishment that could be very difficult to correct.

Reforms in research sector

Significant steps have already been taken to reform the national research sector. The research institutes that formerly belonged to the Academy of Sciences have now acquired full autonomy. Some institutes have been closed down, but a principal policy of the government has been to preserve the capacity of the R&D sector during Lithuania's difficult times of reform.

An important priority of the MoES is the integration of state research institutes into the system of higher education. This transformation is expected to enrich the material base of HEIs, offer opportunities for research in newer fields and improve the quality of studies at Master's and Doctoral levels. With these objectives in view, the new Law on Higher Education makes it possible for HEIs to have research institutes as basic structural units. It will be possible to open institutes in new or interdisciplinary fields or to integrate existing public institutes into universities with suitable profiles.

The OECD review team considers that these policies will contribute greatly to the strengthening of the higher education sector's research potential, as well as to a better learning environment and better quality of study programmes in general.

Nevertheless, these plans meet a great deal of resistance from both HEIs and research institutes. The fears in HEIs are that the student/teacher ratio, already quite low, may become lower still. The research institutes, on the other hand, are worried that, when integrated into particular universities, they will be treated as second-rate units within the larger university structure. In time, these problems can be resolved to the satisfaction of both sides. The policies of the MoES need further support if the consolidation of HEIs and public research institutes is to have a positive impact, both on learning and on research.

The overall impression of the OECD review team is that the funding of research activities in HEIs is at a low level. In the universities visited, researchers expressed concern that they do not, at present, see well-structured procedures for funding from budget sources. This may be a result of the policy of the state institutions in Lithuania to finance entire research institutions, laboratories and more general priority programmes, rather than more specific project-proposals from individual scientists and their research teams. While the first approach has its place in promoting particular priority programmes, the use of project funding for individual researchers' applications is the more widely accepted international practice.

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Development of project funding will strengthen the position of the best scientists of the country and their teams. It is usually individuals that make significant innovations and discoveries – not necessarily institutes or laboratories. Introducing competitive project funding through a National Research Fund can make a considerable difference for the research community in the country and in particular for the research groups in HEIs. The best scientists and their research teams are the most valuable asset of the Lithuanian research system and their efforts can be directed to the country's priority development areas. The team therefore recommends that a much greater proportion of funding be directed to competitive project financing of proposals made by particular individuals or research groups rather than to whole laboratories or institutes.

With respect to the balance between basic and applied research, the data presented so far (Figure 20) reveal that HEIs devote a considerable portion of their funding to applied studies. This is in accordance with the policies of the MoES[23] which is developing several important initiatives to steer developments in the research sector and to increase the number of students in postgraduate Master's and Doctoral studies, including:

- The integration of HEIs and state research institutes.
- Collaboration of different HEIs in the realisation of particular priority research programmes.
- Various ways to engage HEIs in applied research, *e.g.* the establishment of technoparks, co-financing of applied research projects and other initiatives.
- An MoES proposal is to increase the share of GDP allocated to research from 0.57% of GDP to at least 1% by 2005 and 1.5% by the year 2010. It is also intended that HEIs will receive the greater part of budgetary funds for basic research.
- International co-operation, which will have a key role in steering positive developments in the research work of HEIs.

The OECD review team recommends that Lithuania:

- Restructure the budget funding for research. More funds need to be allocated for competitive project bids proposed by small research teams or individual scientists.
- Organise the funding of priority government programmes on a competitive project basis.
- Introduce changes in the legislative and regulatory base to facilitate the commercialisation of scientific products. Researchers should be allowed to participate in and profit from, the commercialisation of innovative technologies and products.

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- Stimulate the development of technoparks associated with universities; they can play a significant role in facilitating and motivating the academic staff to engage in applied research.
- Urgently improve the information resources for research, in terms of better access to journals, books and Internet libraries.
- Support and implement the MoES's plans to gradually increase R&D's share of budgetary funding.
- Support the gradual integration of HEIs and state research institutes.

Summary of recommendations on higher education

Binary education system and colleges

Place high priority on the development of the new college sector, emphasising quality assurance, strong links with the labour market and regional economic development and adequate state budgetary support. Specifically, the OECD team recommends that Lithuania:

- Consider a minimum size for State colleges of 1 200 students except in those cases (such as rural areas) where this would not be feasible. The team also recommends that at least 50% of the academic and professional staff be full-time and permanent staff. The team also strongly supports the provision in the Law on Education that 50% of the staff must have no less than three years' work experience in the sphere of the subject taught.
- Discourage the development of "college-level" study programmes in universities. The team also recommends that Lithuania recognise that a strong college system will be based on institutions whose quality assessment, governance, financing and staff qualifications are aligned with the college mission.
- Maintain a degree of structural and organisational separation between universities and colleges in quality assessment, management and financing. At the same time, Lithuania should develop policies and strategies to promote a degree of harmonisation and co-ordination between the sectors or shared resources and expertise as well as student mobility.
- Give high priority to State budgetary support for the developing colleges and guard against efforts to oppose necessary funding for the sector. It will be important to ensure fair and equitable distribution of higher education funds so that the development of the binary system is not jeopardised.
- Undertake a special initiative – through the MoES and in collaboration with other ministries such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Social Security and Labour – to develop the capacity of these new colleges to contribute to

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regional development. This initiative could include national conferences, sharing of good practice and training for academic and professional staff.

- Maintain the initial placement of the responsibility for quality assessment for the new colleges in the vocational education and training unit of the MoES – and not in the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education.

Academic staff

- Improve over the long-term the salary scales for the academic staff in HEIs. It is essential to increase the incentives for young graduates to pursue careers as lecturers and researchers and counter the need for academic staff to assume positions outside the establishment to earn additional income.

Students

- Rely more on the market and the initiatives of HEIs in the determination of student numbers in specific study programmes. To avoid a surplus of students in particular fields, career planning and counselling of school graduates could be introduced.

Financing higher education.

- The OECD recognises the serious financial constraints facing the Republic of Lithuania and respects the reality of other state priorities. Nevertheless, the team strongly recommends that Lithuania assess the adequacy of current level of state budgetary support for higher education. The team is seriously concerned about the adequacy of budgetary support to meet the increasing demand from qualified students, strengthen quality and retain and develop academic staff, improve the material and technical base of institutions and enhance the Republic's capacity in science.
- Give highest priority to developing the specific policies necessary to implement the new provisions in the new Law on Higher Education. The OECD team strongly endorses the changes.
- Give attention to several specific issues, some of which may require refinement of the provisions of the Law on Higher Education:
  - Strengthen the capacity of state institutions at the level of the Government and MoES to develop and sustain attention to the long-term development plan for the Lithuanian system of higher education as the guiding framework for financing policy.
  - Strengthen the legal basis and capacity for effective institutional management as a prerequisite for de-regulation and decentralisation and sub-

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stantially increased institutional responsibility for achieving more effective and efficient use of resources – especially academic staff.

  - Improve long-term planning but move away from the tight controls of "state orders" for specific numbers of professionals and technicians associated with a command economy, to a more open, flexible system relying on financial incentives and better information to achieve state goals.

- Ensure that new methodologies for allocation of state budgetary funds to institutions take into consideration:
  - Differences in the cost of study programmes;
  - Student enrolments (absolute numbers and changes in numbers);
  - Differences in institutional mission (especially the differences between universities and colleges);
  - Differences in the capacity of institutions (or study programmes within institutions) to generate non-state revenue through fees from students in non-state-paid places, contracts and grants from external sources (*e.g.* research grants or funding from social partners).
- Designate a percentage (1 to 5%) of State budgetary funding to institutions for performance funding tied to institutional performance related to specific goals established in institutional agreements. Performance goals should relate to both the institution's long-term plan and the long-term plan for the Lithuanian higher education system.
- Ensure that financing policy provides incentives (or does not provide disincentives) for institutions to:
  - Increase the use of open/distance learning to improve the accessibility and quality of services (especially to Lithuania's adult population) and to improve the cost-effectiveness of delivery.
  - Avoid unnecessary duplication and collaborate in the provision of study programmes, academic support services (*e.g.* libraries), administrative services and material and technical resources. This should include incentives for students to make use of study programmes and resources of more than one institution in pursuit of their academic goals.
- Co-ordinate changes in institutional financing policy with the development of a long-term policy framework on the sharing of the costs of higher education between the state, students and other funding sources.
- Establish incentives (through tax policy and other means) for enterprises to provide financial support for students and institutions. Also, provide tax incentives for charitable and other non-governmental contributions to the financing of HEIs.

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- Place the highest priority on developing a long-range plan – as an element of the long-range development plan required by the Law on Higher Education – for student financing. Among other points, the plan should:
  - Establish long-term goals regarding access and opportunity for all qualified students in Lithuania;
  - Establish policies, consistent with the Constitution, to guide the sharing of the cost of higher education between the state, students and their parents and other sources;
  - Set forth strategies for ensuring that qualified students are not denied access to higher education because of economic status, geographic location (*e.g.* rural areas), gender, ethnicity or other disadvantaged conditions.

Quality assessment and accountability

Consider possibilities for further progress in achieving the highest international standards in university studies:

- Further streamlining of curricula, with the principal aim of reducing the overall number of courses, especially the great number of smaller, very specialised courses that are now typical for many study programmes.
- Reducing the teaching loads for both students and teachers, in order to provide more room for individual work, project development and research activities.
- Further harmonising curricula with international standards in various fields of studies.

Developing new inter-disciplinary programmes and courses

- Improve the training process by broader introduction of interactive forms of studies, with special emphasis on individual students' work and concentrating the learning process on developing students' ability to creatively apply their newly acquired knowledge.
- Use information technologies more broadly in all stages of the training process, to improve students' competence and preparedness for the challenges of their future careers.
- Improve the system of assessment of student knowledge and competence, by making more use of written examinations as a more objective form of assessing progress. Further development of examination methods and content is needed, in order to assess not only a student's knowledge but also his/her ability to apply it in creative ways.

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Introducing more research elements in the study process

- Ensure that courses in the humanities and social sciences are an integral part of study programmes irrespective of the main field of study. The philosophy of a "liberal education" will widen the horizons of students; in the present-day working environment, this is a necessity.
- Improve the conditions under which studies take place, in spite of severe financial constraints. Special government programmes, international projects, links with business partners and, as stressed above under financing, increased institutional collaboration, can be developed to achieve progress. The creation of a modern ICT network is essential for all HEIs.
- Develop a more flexible decentralised system of quality assessment and assurance balanced by continuation – and strengthening – of effective state quality assessment and quality assurance functions. By not being consumed by the details of registration of programmes and overseeing the quality of individual study programmes, the MoES Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education and other state entities with quality assurance responsibilities can give more attention to functions such as:
  - Monitoring the performance of the higher education system as a whole.
  - Quality assurance on the establishment of new institutions or major changes in institutional missions (such as a change from college to university), significant changes in institutional profiles that would unnecessarily duplicate existing programmes or have major state budgetary implications.
  - Overseeing the institutional accreditation process, holding institutions accountable for internal quality assessment across all study programmes and other dimensions of university and college mission.
  - Overseeing the periodic auditing of quality in fields of study – within individual institutions and across institutions that offer the same study programmes.
  - Ensuring public accountability and transparency in all quality assurance processes.
  - Linking the results of quality assessment and accreditation to state funding of institutions through the state agreements with each institution.
  - Developing new quality assurance policies for open/distance learning and other new modes of higher education delivery.
- Make a thorough review of all State laws, regulations and other policies related to quality assurance in higher education to identify changes that will create the policy environment necessary to make open/distance learning and lifelong learning a reality, not just a vision. Such a review is also impor-

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tant to ensure that basic policies are in place to prevent serious abuse as new ICT-based modes of delivery expand.

- Insist on full transparency of all quality assessment/accreditation processes in higher education at all levels from colleges to universities in order to ensure essential public accountability. This should include annual reports to the public by each institution on institutional performance, including the results of quality assessments undertaken in the previous year and other appropriate performance indicators.

Open and distance learning

- Make ODL an integral element of the long-term development plan for the Lithuanian higher education system.
- Require pedagogical universities (through state agreements, performance requirements for receiving state budgetary support) to recognise that distance education and autonomous learning methodologies will become essential for teachers of tomorrow's schools, vocational and HEIs. These institutions must provide appropriate pre-service and in-service courses which must be recurrent to keep teachers up-to-date.
- Include the newly developing colleges and institutions within the vocational education and training sector in the MoES plans for ODL.
- Translate into Lithuanian the in-service course Learning about Open Learning (LOLA) as a cost-effective way of providing training for distance education workers.
- Change financing policy to provide incentives for HEIs to expand and increase the quality of open/distance learning. Universities are given less state funding for distance students than for on campus students. The percentage has increased recently to 50%. This is certainly not an incentive for universities to foster distance modes of delivery, or to expend energy in raising its quality. Consideration should be given to increasing this percentage further as soon as financial resources allow.
- Revise existing correspondence courses in the light of the expertise now available in the country. These courses do not need to be abandoned, but they should become more flexible and less demanding of on-campus attendance. Where the Soviet model is still operating, it should be replaced by course structures that are more in line with the current needs of Lithuania's adult working students.
- Bring correspondence courses under the generic umbrella of open and distance education rather than continue to treat them as something different and less valuable.

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- Replace oral examinations, where the discipline allows, by written examinations. This would allow students from a wider spread of locations to undertake courses of choice from a range of universities throughout the country.
- Implement plans for the extension of the existing network to Utena and Marijampole as soon as funding allows.
- Place a high priority on developing and implementing a quality control mechanism for open and distance learning courses. Evaluation of open and distance learning courses needs to include the following:
  - Quality of open and distance learning materials.
  - Existence and clarity of course objectives.
  - Appropriateness of the media mix selected.
  - Reliability of the assessment tools.
  - Efficiency of course administration including assessment arrangements.
  - Quality of the interactivity mechanisms.
  - Degree of facilitation to enable individual study.
  - Adequacy of student support arrangements.
- Develop undergraduate open and distance learning courses for whole programmes, using the expertise developed through participation in the EC-Phare project.
- Make explicit provision in the State budgetary process for sustaining funding for those international support and demonstration initiatives that are critical to accomplishment of the long-term development plan for Lithuanian higher education.

Governance and management of higher education establishments

Take actions to strengthen the legal requirements for effective university governance management and public accountability. Specifically, the team recommends that Lithuania amend the Law on Higher Education:

- Provide for involvement of university councils in the process of election of rectors. Also, amend the law to require the concurrence of the President of the Republic with the election of rectors to ensure that the position of university rector is fully accountable to the public.
- Add the language eliminated from previous drafts, which emphasises that rectors should have management experience. The provisions from the May 1999 draft that indicate that college directors may be scholars with pedagogical and management work experience should also be included in the Law on Higher Education.

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State co-ordination, long-term planning and state leadership structures

Develop a mechanism to ensure sustained attention to the long-term development plan for higher education – and for sustaining education reform as whole – over a multiyear period as governments and as other external conditions change. As an external group, the OECD review team cannot recommend precisely how this recommendation could be implemented in Lithuania. However, several of the criteria for such a mechanism might include:

- Location at the highest level of the state (presumably the President of the Republic).
- A majority participation of leaders representing Lithuanian society, social partners and others who are from outside higher education and science.
- A focus on the link between a strong higher education system and the future of the Republic of Lithuania – its strength as an independent, democratic state, the quality of life of all the population and the strength and competitive position of the Republic's economy.
- Effective co-ordination, if not integration with, long-term planning and development for the whole education system from pre-school through life-long learning.
- Long-term (10 to 15 year) goals, with clear benchmarks for measuring and reporting to the public on progress toward these goals.

Research in higher education institutions

- Restructure the budget funding for research. More funds need to be allocated for competitive project bids proposed by small research teams or individual scientists.
- Organise the funding of priority government programmes on a competitive project basis.
- Introduce changes in the legislative and regulatory base to facilitate the commercialisation of scientific products. Researchers should be allowed to participate in and profit from, the commercialisation of innovative technologies and products.
- Stimulate the development of technoparks associated with universities; they can play a significant role in facilitating and motivating the academic staff to engage in applied research.
- Urgently improve the information resources for research, in terms of better access to journals, books and Internet libraries.
- Support and implement the MoES's plans to gradually increase R&D's share of budgetary funding.
- Support the gradual integration of HEIs and state research institutes.

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Notes

1. Republic of Lithuania, Ministry of Education and Science, *White Book on Higher Education Reform*, Vilnius, 1999.
2. *Ibid.*, 1999, p. 3.
3. Law on Higher Education, Article 1.
4. *Ibid.*, Article 6, sec. 1.
5. *Ibid.*, Article 7, sec. 1.
6. Brinkman, Paul T. and Leslie, Larry L., "Economies of Scale in Higher Education: Sixty Years of Research," *The Review of Higher Education* (Fall 1986), Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 1-28.
7. Law on Higher Education, Article 7, section 6.
8. *Ibid.*, Article 7, section 3.
9. *Ibid.*, Article 27, sec. 2 and 3.
10. OECD, *Education at a Glance*, 1998. Paris: OECD, 1998, p. 174. Net entry rates need to be treated with some care. Persons who enter non-university education may also enter universities later in their lives; therefore first-time entry rates for a country cannot be simply obtained by adding university entrance to non-university tertiary entrance figures.
11. The most recent data (1999) regarding financing of higher education pre-dated the new Law on Higher Education and the establishment of the legal basis for the new college sector within higher education. As indicated above, the existing colleges evolved from former *technicums* and enrol students at the post-secondary vocational level but are not considered within higher education. A number of these colleges are becoming colleges within higher education, but this change had not taken place in 1999. Therefore, the data in Table 48 on colleges is for the larger number of existing colleges, not the more limited number of colleges within higher education now under development.
12. The data on financing HEIs of Lithuania are taken from the 1999 balances of estimates of expenditure of the said institutions submitted to the Ministry of Finance; the data on junior colleges are based on the data of the Ministry of Finance.
13. Accounts of the execution of State budget of the Republic of Lithuania of the corresponding year, Ministry of Finance.
14. Article 22 of the Republic of Lithuanian Law on Research and Higher Education runs as follows: "The Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania approves of the total sum to research and higher education. The Government of the republic of Lithuania, taking into consideration the evaluation of financing projects carried out by the Science Council of Lithuania, shall allocate budgetary subsidies to institutions of research and higher education…"

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15. This section draws extensively from Ministry of Education and Science of The Republic of Lithuania, *Financing of Higher Education of Lithuanian in the New Millennium*, Vilnius, 2000, p. 22-26.
16. Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania // The Official Gazette. 1992, No. 33-1014.
17. Resolution No. 473 of 31 March 1995 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania *Concerning Scholarships of Students of Higher Education Institutions and Students of Professional Schools* // Official Gazette No. 30-692, 1995.
18. *Education*. Vilnius. The Department of Statistics at the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, 2000.
19. Johnstone, D. Bruce and Shroff-Mehta, Preeti, "Higher Education Finance and Accessibility: An International Comparative Examination of Tuition and Financial Assistance Policies," Centre for Comparative and Global Studies in Education, Graduate School of Education, University at Buffalo, State University of New York, February 2000.
20. Development of this course is funded by Kaunas University of Technology, not by EC-PHARE.
21. Law on Higher Education, Article 25, section 4.
22. Republic of Lithuania, Ministry of Education and Science, *White Book on Higher Education Reform*, Vilnius, 1999.
23. *Ibid.*, p.71.

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Chapter 8

Future Challenges and Sustaining Reform

Introduction

Lithuania has made significant progress in education reform since regaining independence. Progress has been greatly aided by broad consensus among the Republic's leaders about the basic goals of the 1992 General Concept and consistent pursuit of these goals over the past decade. While some of the details of that Concept might be different today, the basic framework remains one of the most forward-thinking and progressive of any observed by the OECD team elsewhere in Eastern and Central.

The OECD team emphasises that it takes time, persistent and consistent hard work to transform an education system – especially a transformation of the breadth and depth envisioned in the Concept:

> … a change in the mental climate of society: a basic comprehension of the democratic values, a new political and economic literacy, the maturation of a moral culture.[1]

Lithuania faces a fundamental challenge in sustaining the step-by-step process of reform over the next decade and beyond. This will require an even broader and deeper public understanding and commitment to the basic goals.

At the time of the OECD review, Lithuania was embarking on a new phase of reform. Lithuania now has in place the basic elements of the necessary legal framework. There appears to be broad agreement on the priorities and strategies as summarised by the MoES at the beginning of the review. All leaders clearly recognise the hard work ahead in implementing about changes that will reach all people in Lithuania – all learners, schools and regions.

The previous chapters of this review contain specific recommendations on each of the major sectors of the Lithuanian education system. The intent of this chapter is to highlight several issues and several crosscutting themes that, from the perspective of the OECD review team, are of strategic importance to the future of education reform in Lithuania. The issues can be grouped according to the

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broad priorities set forth by the Minister of Education and Science at the beginning of the OECD review.

Ensuring quality

The OECD review team concurs that ensuring quality – and public accountability – should continue to be a central priority for Lithuania. Despite significant progress cited in the previous chapters, a number of important tasks remain. The following are examples that are especially important from the OECD perspective:

- Clarify the rationale and objectives and resolve inconsistencies in the implementation of major changes such as the move to 10-year basic school, profiling and the development of academic and technical gymnasia. While the review team supports these changes, widely varying interpretations of why these changes were important. There also remain unanswered questions about the implications for rural schools, vocational education, the adequacy of support and preparation of schools and teachers to bring about the changes and the capacity of the schools to serve the full range of student ability levels.
- Provide necessary support for school-level change. The OECD team underscores the need for support for teachers and school principals in implementing reforms. The key to achieving systemic change, as discussed in Chapter 2, is the alignment of curriculum, assessment, textbooks and curricular materials, teacher professional development and the policies of financing, management and accountability. The team is especially concerned about the need for a new textbook policy and significant improvements in the availability of computers and capacity for ICT. Alignment of teacher and school principal professional development with reform is also a priority.
- Narrow the disparities between rural and urban areas. The review supports the current priorities of the MoES for school mapping and optimisation, but expresses cautions about the education and social implications of changes.
- Sustain and increase the coherence of the quality evaluation and monitoring system. Through the work of the National Examination Centre, Lithuania has made significant progress but continued implementation of assessment and evaluation systems will require additional budget resources and capacity. A commitment to sustain efforts initiated with external support will be especially important. Increased attention to public reporting and accountability and monitoring the performance of the education system as a whole are priorities.

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- Continue to strengthen quality assurance in higher education. Again, the OECD team was impressed with the progress already made, but is especially concerned about the need for:
    - Greater public accountability and transparency in the accreditation process for universities; and
    - Continued development of a quality assurance process for the new colleges that is appropriate for their mission and distinct from the process for universities.
- Continue to reform vocational education to achieve better alignment with the changing economy and labour market. While progress has been made, the OECD team is concerned that significant gaps remain between the changing labour market demands and the capacity of the vocational and training system to respond. Especially important will be the resolution of unanswered questions about the impact on vocational education of reforms such as 10-year basic school, profiling, gymnasia and the new colleges in higher education.
- Undertake a fundamental reform of teacher education. The OECD review identified the lack of teacher education reform (especially pre-service education) as one of the most serious gaps in Lithuanian education reform. Addressing this problem should be one of the highest priorities.
- Review the adequacy of current quality assurance policies and mechanisms for new modes of delivery (*e.g.* open/distance learning, global learning networks and ICT). Policies designed to ensure quality in traditional modes of delivery are not adequate for the rapidly developing new modes.
- Align financing and management with reform goals. As emphasised below, efforts to improve quality depend fundamentally on reform in financing and management at all levels and in all sectors of the system.

Ensuring accessibility

From a comparative perspective, the OECD team found that Lithuania is making good progress in ensuring access to learning of good quality. As emphasised at several points in this review, especially in Chapter 5, a number of challenges remain. The OECD recommends that Lithuania:

- Continue to strengthen early childhood education to ensure that all children are prepared to enter compulsory education ready to learn. Improving access to and participation in pre-school education and increasing the number of children entering school at age 6 are important steps.
- Implement the recently enacted Law on Special Education. Narrowing the gap between promise and practice will require a significant investment in

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teacher professional development. The OECD team is also concerned that few of the school facilities visited in the course of the review were designed to be accessible to special needs students.

- Ensure that the reforms of upper secondary education (profiling, development of technical and academic gymnasia) address the needs of students in the full range of ability levels. The danger is that profiling could lead to increased premature specialisation and that convergence in upper secondary education between general education and vocational education could lead to imbalance between academic and professional/vocational missions.
- Develop a national strategy for engaging a broader spectrum of the adult population in continuing education and lifelong learning. Continuous renewal of the nation's human resources will be essential for Lithuania's competitive position in Europe and the global economy. Public communication, commitment of employers to training and changes in public policies (including tax incentives) will be necessary to increase demand for adult education and training.
- Implement the new colleges in higher education. The capacity of Lithuania to move from severely constrained access to broad access comparable to leading nations in the world depends fundamentally on the development of a more differentiated higher education system. Implementing the new college sector and student financing (see below) should be among Lithuania's highest priorities. The new colleges should be distributed more evenly across the regions of Lithuania and should be not only points of access to higher education but also important resources for regional economic development.
- Develop a long-range plan for student financing in higher education. Failure to develop such a plan will mean steadily declining quality and restricted access and opportunity. As emphasised in Chapter 7, this plan should:
  - Establish long-term goals regarding access and opportunity for all qualified students in Lithuania.
  - Establish policies, consistent with the Constitution, to guide the sharing of the cost of higher education between the state, students and their parents and other sources.
  - Set forth strategies for ensuring that qualified students are not denied access to higher education because of economic status, geographic local (*e.g.* rural areas), gender, ethnicity, or other disadvantaged conditions.

Harmonisation of the educational system

The findings of the OECD review team give strong support to the priority for improving internal and external harmonisation of the Lithuanian education system.

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The goal of creating a more coherent education system is clear; however, a significant gap remains between that goal and the current reality across schools, institutions and regions. Among the points for improvement are the following:

- Improve the communication of the basic rationale for and objectives of reform. As emphasised above related to quality, the OECD team found widely varying interpretation of the rationale behind specific aspects of the reforms. The tendency is for the focus to be on specific means (*e.g.* the move to 10-year basic school) but in the process, sight is lost of the underlying objectives and rationale. Consistent communication by the Lithuania's policy leaders of why change is fundamental to the future of the Republic and to the lives of current and future generations is important to sustain reform in the difficult implementation process. Resolving the ambiguities and inconsistencies mentioned above under quality would also be an important step toward harmonisation.

- Remove barriers to the movement of students between and among institutions and levels of the education system. The OECD team has a sense that there is limited mobility between the general education and vocational education systems and that significant barriers remain for students who begin in a vocational/professional track to move to higher levels of the system if they demonstrate the prerequisite knowledge and skill. Access of adult learners to the system is still limited.

- Achieve significantly improved co-ordination among ministries concerned with education policy, especially between the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. As emphasised in Chapters 4 and 6, the OECD team finds the competition between two ministries to provide services to be unproductive and wasteful, especially when co-ordinated action to address problems of regional economic development is a high priority. The Government clearly already recognises the importance of co-ordination across ministries and especially between the MoES and other ministries concerned with the health and welfare of children and regional economic development.

- Promote co-ordination, sharing of resources and student mobility among higher education institutions, especially those in the same metropolitan area. Incentives in the financing system should promote collaboration and sharing of resources across the whole higher education system and between that system and other education sectors. Further development of the link between school-leaving examinations and higher education entrance and facilitating access of qualified students from secondary vocational education to the new colleges should be priorities.

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- Align financing policy with long-term education goals. As discussed later in this chapter, disincentives in financing policy may be the most significant barriers to reform. The issue is not only the level of financing but also the policies for allocating and managing resources. Because of the dominant role played by financing policy in setting directions for the education system, it is especially important that there be a strong link between the long-term development plans for education of the MoES and the policies of the Ministry of Finance.
- Continue to realign the roles and responsibilities at all levels of the education system to support a more decentralised, responsive and accountable school and institutional network. Lithuania has made significant progress in decentralising the education system. Examples include: increasing the authority and responsibility of municipalities and schools, delegating MoES functions to the counties, reorganising the MoES to emphasise policy leadership and co-ordination and providing for autonomy and management flexibility for universities and other higher education institutions.

The Government Programme for 2000 to 2004 places a high priority on reducing the authority of central ministries, consolidating county administration and increasing the authority and responsibility of municipalities. The OECD team supports the move to a more decentralised system, but is concerned that in order for these changes to be effective and to provide basic assurances for quality and equity, certain conditions must be met, including:

- Increasing the leadership and management skills at the level of schools and institutions to assume increased responsibility. This point applies just as strongly to the qualifications of university rectors and college directors as it does to school principals and directors in comprehensive schools and vocational institutions.
- Changing the mentality guiding quality assurance and "inspectorate" functions throughout the system, but especially at the county level. The change must be from the centralised inspecting and controlling of Soviet times, to monitoring, supporting and holding schools and teachers accountable for performance.
- Balancing decentralisation with a MoES focused on strategic leadership and system monitoring and with the authority necessary to ensure that the decentralised system is accountable for performance in line with state priorities.

Renovation of the infrastructure of the education network

The findings of the OECD review strongly support the priority of renovating the infrastructure of the education system. The OECD team also supports the school

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mapping initiative and efforts to optimise the school network (especially in general and vocational education). The OECD team is especially concerned about the need for improved co-ordination of necessary policy changes and recommends that Lithuania:

- Reform the underlying financing policies for general education (as recommended in Chapter 2) to provide explicit incentives for investments in capital improvements, essential instructional equipment and other material resources.
- Achieve an appropriate balance between the priority of improving the compensation of teachers and the priorities of maintaining and reviewing the infrastructure of the school network.
- Implement the changes in financing of higher education institutions (including the provisions for three-year agreements) as provided in the Law on Higher Education.
- Increase the financial incentives for schools and institutions to collaborate and share resources both within regions and nationally.
- Require a thorough educational and social assessment of the impact of optimisation on the affected children, families, schools and communities (as recommended in Chapter 2).
- Address what the OECD team perceived as potential contradictions between optimisation and the implementation of other priorities such as the move to 10-year basic school and profiling (see Chapter 2).
- Continue to place a high priority, as emphasised in the Government Programme for 2000-2004, on the capacity of the Republic's education system to prepare youth and adults for the information society. The need is not only for significant investment in hardware and software and new modes of delivery, but also in the development of human resources (curriculum, teacher professional development, etc.).[2]

Reforming financing and strengthening school and institutional management

Reform of the financing and management of the education system is an essential precondition for further progress on education reform. Clearly additional investments in education are needed, but these appear to be likely only with the overall growth and development of the Republic's economy. However, the major problems in financing appear to be in the structure of current policies – in the incentives and disincentives imbedded in policy for effective and efficient use of existing resources. In most cases, issues of financing are interrelated with issues of management. Specific recommendations on financing and management are included in the earlier chapters, especially Chapter 3 on pre-school, compulsory and general

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education and Chapter 7, on higher education. The OECD team recommends that Lithuania continue to place a high priority on financing and management reform throughout the education system, specifically:

- Recognise the important link between public administration reform and education reform. An effective education system depends fundamentally on strong, effective municipal governments, a redesigned regional structure and a central government focused on strategic leadership and co-ordination.
- Address the continuing disparities among municipalities and regions in their capacity to support and provide education – as well as to assume additional responsibilities delegated by the central government (*e.g.* vocational education and institutions for students with special needs).
- Provide increased flexibility at the municipal and school levels for use of budget resources to achieve reform objectives and more efficient and effective use of resources (see Chapter 3).
  - Implement the provisions of the Law on Higher Education requiring a long-term development plan for higher education, agreements with institutions and stronger links between long-range planning, the results of quality assessment and the allocation of state budget resources to institutions.
  - Significantly strengthen the requirements for performance, public accountability and effective internal management of universities, including seeking amendments to the Law on Higher Education as necessary (see Chapter 7).
  - Give high priority to a long-term plan for student financing.
  - Modify financing policies to provide incentives for the development of new modes of delivering educational services (open/distance learning, use of ICT, etc.), provided that essential quality and performance conditions are met.
  - Continue to develop the policy environment (financing, quality assurance and accountability) for the development of high-quality, competitive non-public schools and institutions.
  - Modify tax policies to provide incentives for the diversification of sources on non-public revenues to support education, including contributions from social partners.

Sustaining the momentum of education reform

Throughout this report, the OECD team praises Lithuania for sustaining reform over the past decade. Several conditions contributed to this success, includ-

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ing the sound, forward-thinking nature of the General Concept, the broad consensus among political leaders about principles and goals, the support of NGOs and informal networks and the continuity supported in part by civil service reform. The OECD team is concerned, however, that as strong as the foundation for change may be today, the possibility of future discord and loss of support remains strong. As stressed at the beginning of this chapter, bringing about a fundamental transformation of an education system takes time. While people may agree about concepts and principles, they often disagree when it comes to practical implementation and difficult choices must be made.

At the time of the review in October 1999, the President of the Republic had convened a working group on a long-term development strategy for education, recognising the need for broad consensus among key political parties and interests to sustain reform. While this working group had not completed its report by the time of this report, the OECD strongly endorses the intent of this effort. The General Concept has served Lithuania well, but the social, economic and political contexts have changed dramatically since the critical period of 1988 to 1992. While the core principles and concepts remain relevant, some of the implementing details and timelines are no longer appropriate or feasible.

The OECD therefore recommends that Lithuania develop, through the leadership initiative of the highest levels of the Republic, a new long-term strategy for education in Lithuania. Such a strategy should, among other points:

- Draw upon the 1992 General Concept so as to emphasise continuity and to give added support to the changes to be implemented over the next decade and beyond.
- Link education reform to the major social, economic and cultural priorities facing the Republic of Lithuania over the next 10 to 25 years. The Republic's human capital is its most important asset to thrive and compete within Europe and the global economy and information society.
- Set forth clear, measurable long-term goals and establish benchmarks for measuring progress and reporting to the public.
- Engage a broad spectrum of Lithuanian society in shaping the goals and strategies, including social partners and the national communications media. The aim should be to renew and deepen the consensus that gave strength to the General Concept and to heighten public awareness of why transformation of the nation's education system is critical to virtually every dimension of Lithuanian society, economy, culture and national defence. As in the past, NGOs and informal networks will be critical elements of the strategy to engage and maintain support of educators and others at the grassroots level.

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- Invest in further development of the information and evaluation systems that will be essential for monitoring performance and progress. International comparative information on performance and best practice should be among the core components of such a system. Providing state budgetary support to sustain and strengthen the work previously supported by the EC-Phare programme and other external initiatives of the National Examination Centre is an example of the steps necessary to develop and sustain a comprehensive, coherent information system for strategic planning, monitoring and public communication.

In conclusion, the OECD review teams finds that the Republic of Lithuania has a remarkably robust education system and a solid conceptual and legal foundation for continuing improvement over the coming decade. The Republic's leaders understand the issues they face in the next stage of reform and are deeply committed to moving step-by-step from concepts and laws to actual changes in practice and performance.

It was an honour for the OECD team to conduct this review and it is the team's hope that the report will provide practical information and support for the continuing progress of education reform in Lithuania.

Notes

1. Republic of Lithuania, Ministry of Education and Culture, *General Concept of Education in Lithuania*, Vilnius, 1992, p. 8.
2. *Seimas* of the Republic of Lithuania, Resolution on Programme of the Government of Lithuania for 2000-2004, 4. Development of Information Society, Vilnius, November 9, 2000.

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OECD PUBLICATIONS, 2, rue André-Pascal, 75775 PARIS CEDEX 16
PRINTED IN FRANCE
(14 2002 02 1 P) ISBN 92-64-18717-0 – No. 52165 2002

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Reviews of National Policies for Education
LITHUANIA

Reform of education, training and human resource development is an [illegible] part of the transition to a democratic society and market economy. Lithuania [illegible] progress in all these areas since reform began in 1990. The challenge for [illegible] Ministry of Education and Science has been to promote and support [illegible] meet the needs of the new economy and society as well as the interests [illegible] young people and adults, in the face of a shortage of [illegible] and [illegible] resources.

The book first gives a brief overview of [illegible] in Lithuania and describes the development of education in the country [illegible] political changes. It then presents an analysis of the current situation [illegible] identifies key directions for the reinforcement of the reforms in light of [illegible] challenges encountered by officials, communities [illegible] and students under very dynamic conditions. It concludes with a [illegible] recommendations of areas of education, learning effectiveness [illegible] curriculum, management and governance for flexibility, [illegible] change and resources and financing. This review will be very useful to [illegible] Lithuanian professionals and their international counterparts.

This review is part of the OECD's ongoing co-operation with the [illegible] economies around the [illegible].

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